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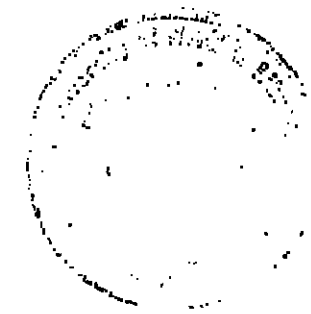
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MAY 21 1982

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### BIOGRAPHY AND LETTERS

## The magus of Mallorca

By Anthony Burgess

MARTIN SEYMOUR-SMITH:

Robert Graves

His Life and Work

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PAUL O'PREY (Editor):

In Broken Images

Selected Letters of Robert Graves

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Martin Seymour-Smith first met Robert Graves during the latter's enforced English exile: the Falangists had driven him from Deyá to Devon, and the Second World War postponed his reconciliation with the Franco régime. Seymour-Smith was only fourteen and "full of brash questions" about poetry. Graves gave succinct answers. Dylan Thomas was "nothing more, really, than a Welsh demagogic masturbator who failed to pay his bills". Stephen Spender was "a nice chap, but better as a greengrocer than a poet". T. S. Eliot was "a very decent chap, really" but had sold out to Anglicanism and published a detestable poetaster named Auden. Ezra Pound? "Yes, he had met Pound once: in T. E. Lawrence's rooms at All Souls. He'd had a wet handshake and was clearly crazy." Graves was glad that his future biographer was "getting to the stage of realising that there are hardly any poets or ever have been; this is the only decent excuse for writing poems oneself, because after all there is such a thing as poetry."

This kind of puerile dismissal of most of his contemporaries might have been excusable near closing time in the Wheatsheaf or York Minster, but there is something immoral in the spectacle of a grown man of proven poetic authority corrupting a youth with his own prejudices. On the other hand, Graves was entitled to write of poets in this manner because he knew what made a poet, or certainly a poem, bad. The essay on the Great English Lyric in *The Common Asphodel* is just and devastating. He and Laura Riding, in their *Survey of Modernist Poetry*, had pioneered the technique of dissecting a poem before pronouncing on it, a thing that only Dr Johnson and Coleridge seemed to have done

before. William Empson - who, of course, was no good - developed this technique in his *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, to, it is generally accepted, the benefit of the art of criticism. It is generally accepted too, even among Graves's strongest admirers, that the magus of Mallorca would have done well to apply to his own work the informed rigour he brought to that of others.

For Graves's importance as a poet still seems to be in doubt. He has produced enough to ensure that (as with Wordsworth) at least ten per cent of his output has to be taken seriously, but there is not one stanza or even line of his that has become a common quotation among the literary. Pound may have been an impostor, Auden a plagiarist, Eliot a time-server and Yeats (whom Graves particularly despised) a poseur, but they have all modified our attitude to life and implanted certain ineffable rhythms in our brains. Graves does not hug the memory. He seems rhythmically flaccid and has never quite come to terms with the movement of spoken English. His diction has a tendency to obsolete inversion. There are many poems of his which one would not be without - this, for instance, which astounded Eliot:

Circling the eirellings of their fish,  
Nuns walk in white and pray;  
For he is chaste as they  
Who was dark-faced and hot in Silvia's day

And in his pool drowns each unspoken wish.  
But his extravagant rejection of the entire corpus of modern poetry in English - with the exception of Hardy, Frost, Ransom and, of course, Riding - put him into a position of dangerous eccentricity, demanding from his readers a rehabilitation of taste more appropriate to a cultus than to a decent catholicity.

Of the value of many of his prose writings there can be no doubt. Most of the criticism is admirable and entertaining. The historical novels are very readable, and *I, Claudius* is a compelling read, only as a television series but as a Korda film that never got itself completed. Of much of his prose output Graves has been generally dismissive. His fine autobiography *Goodbye to All That* was written too fast and very carelessly. He essayed the novel not as a novelist but as a needy hack, thus putting

himself outside the canons of fictional art: so long as the books paid the bills, the critics could be ignored. The scholars too could be ignored when they complained about the false anthropology of *The White Goddess*. A lot of the prose was there to subsidize the poetry. Some of the prose was a theoretical justification of poetic practice. The only thing that really mattered was the poetry. Eliot never liked talk of "poets", preferring himself to be thought of as a man who sometimes produced poems, but Graves took the title of poet very seriously. He wrote poetry, and therefore he had to write poetry. It was never a matter of his having written poetry and therefore being entitled to the high title. Never was a literary life so lotitly dedicated. But perhaps dedication, like patriotism, is not enough.

The life itself is of appalling interest. It is not merely fascinating but filmable. It has prolonged *Sturm und Drang* and ends with a hardly earned tranquillity. Seymour-Smith draws on *Goodbye to All That* and the memoirs of Graves's father (the first part, "Father O'Flynn") for the first part, filling in with details previously withheld and essaying psychological interpretations not available to the autobiographer. Graves was a chaste boy with a public-school education who tried, as we all do, to distinguish between love and lust. He loved a fellow-pupil who turned out to be homosexual. War neurosis, wrongly termed shell-shock, uncovered sexual guilt which had nothing to do with sexual enactment. At the end of the war (and nobody has given a better account of it from the infantry officer's angle), Graves, a virgin, married another virgin, Nancy Nicholson, a militant feminist who alleged that the sufferings of soldiers were nothing compared to the sufferings of women. She kept to her maiden name, thus rendering eventual divorce awkward, since the petition Nicholson v Graves was not acceptable in law. Children were born, but boys, people felt sorry for Graves. A phrase used by Gaudin in Saul Bellow's *Humboldt's Gift* - "pussy-whipped" - seems appropriate. Graves's post-war life begins with pussy-whipping from one woman and continues with it from another.

Graves and his family, having made no money either from writing or from keeping a shop on Boar's Hill, went to Egypt, where there was a professor's job waiting. With them went Laura Riding. She, a young Jewish poet from Manhattan, had tried to boss the Fugitives in Nashville, Tennessee. One of the Fugitives was John Crowe Ransom, whom Graves admired. It was thought a good idea to send Laura Riding off to boss Robert Graves. She turned up in London on the eve of the Graveses' departure and attached herself to the family during the short-lived Cairo venture. Graves's account of his professional troubles in *Goodbye to All That* is merely diverting: here we learn that he went through hell.

Really it was an anteroom to hell. The real hell began back in London, when the *ménage à trois* was turned into a foursome by the appearance of a certain Geoffrey Phibbs. Up to that point things had not been going too badly. Graves had earned £500 from a popular book on his friend T. E. Lawrence and had put the money into the *Seal Press*, an enterprise designed to "actualise the new thinking, bring some of the right people together, and provide practical examples of how writing should be done." The implied precepts of *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (published in July 1927) required illustration. Then Phibbs, an Irish journalist, much impressed by Laura Riding's work, joined the group at what was known as "Free Love Corner" and helped to initiate hell.

Of Laura Riding, whose influence dominated Graves's life for so long, something must be said, since it is probable that she does not now have many readers. It is enough to examine the poems by which she is represented in Michael Roberts's *Faber Book of Modern Verse* (the first edition) to be made aware of her genuine power. The trouble with her as a person was that she was too conscious of her literary gifts and highly resentful of those who did not appreciate them. She was egotistical and damnably dogmatic. I remember her giving, in Manchester, a fifteen-minute lecture on the nature of poetry and refusing discussion, since she alone knew the meaning of words and her auditors could not be trusted to use them at all. When her Col-

lected *Poems* appeared in 1938 I gave the book, apparently, the only review which she deemed intelligent. She wrote a long letter to my editor praising my appreciation of her "womanliness" (her prose was always shocking) but demanding that her laudations be not published. When, in the same year, I thought rather less highly of Graves's first *Collected Poems*, I was also ill-mannered. I had a notion that something very queer was going on in that, as it had now become, *ménage à deux*.

Laura Riding's womanliness responded violently to Phibbs, whom she called an Irish Adonis. She tried to thrust Graves back into the arms of Nancy, who did not now want him. Then Phibbs announced that he wanted no more of Laura; he preferred Nancy. Laura's response was to drink Lysoal, to no effect, and then to leap out of a fourth-floor window with the valediction "Goodbye, Phibbs, run away. A deformation of the spine, in evidence on her Manchester visit, and a prospect of deportation for attempted suicide were the fruits of the escapade. Phibbs lived in a houseboat with Nancy and her four children by Graves, whom the father had to support. Graves and Laura Riding went off to Mallorca.

Graves loved her but was denied access to her bed. He put up meekly with her tyranny and probably for a good reason. Her poetic influence was wholly beneficial, even though her potboiling prose efforts were unpublishable, while Graves's paid the bills. She resented this. She resented his becoming known while she remained unknown. She overestimated her personal magic and her capacity to arouse lust. She became a prophet and proposed reforming the world. When, with war imminent, she and Graves went to America, she perhaps all too explicitly, fell in love with Schuyler Jackson, a man with little learning and no literary talent. His marriage broke up and she became tyrannically submissive to his physical advances. In *The White Goddess* Graves was to write:

The archives of morbid psychology are full of Bassard histories. An English or American woman in a nervous breakdown of sexual

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# The dreams of the Bund

By Bernard Wasserstein

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686pp. Cambridge University Press.  
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0 521 23028 4

This is a survey of an extensive magnetic field lying between two immensely powerful poles of ideological attraction. Russian socialism and Jewish nationalism, both born as serious political movements in 1897-98, both reaching maturity in the early days of November 1917, both surmounting internal and external challenges of exceptional persistence and ferocity, survive together as two of the enduring political achievements of our time. Attracted by the auroral lights of these success stories, previous historians have mapped the political geography of these subtly related yet distinctly polar zones. Jonathan Frankel, by contrast, investigates the hitherto little known inter-polar regions whose denizens, notably the adherents of the Jewish socialist-nationalist Bund, boasted a record of almost total failure. But failure often reveals more to the historian than success. Frankel's exploration of the middle ground between socialism and nationalism held by the Bund throws into relief the failings of its better-known polar rivals.

The Russian Jewish intelligentsia in the late nineteenth century confronted as Frankel notes in his introduction "a double alienation - at once estranged from, and drawn to, the ways and problems of their own nationhood, on the one hand, and a Russian or 'universalist' political philosophy, on the other." The crucial choice seemed to be between revolution or exodus. But many sought to resolve the dilemma by embracing (in varying proportions) combinations of both socialism and nationalism. The outstanding example of such a synthesis was the General Jewish Labour Union in Lithuania, Poland and Russia, generally known as the Bund. Tracing its origins back to the earlier 1890s, the Bund was officially founded in 1897 (the same year as the Zionist Organization). A year later the Bund joined in the foundation of the Russian Social Democratic Party. Indeed, the founding congress of the RSDRP at Minsk in March 1898 took place partly on the initiative of the Bund. The occasion marked for the Bundists the fulfilment, as Frankel puts it, "of their most cherished ambition: the integration of a Jewish revolutionary movement with its autonomy preserved and respected, into a general, international, framework." But the heady dreams of 1898 were soon to be dashed.

Part of the reason was the ambiguity which lay at the heart of the Bundist ideology. As Frankel writes: "Bound together in conspiratorial brotherhood, the leadership could never cut the Gordian knot, could never finally decide whether its first duty lay with the international proletariat or with national liberation. In this respect, perhaps, it reflected more faithfully than any other movement the divided soul of the modern Jewish intelligentsia." The history of the Bund is largely a chronicle of successive oscillations between relatively nationalist and internationalist positions.

Beyond the internal ambiguity was the external hostility. From its earliest populist origins the Russian revolutionary movement was imbued with a deep strain of suspicion towards Jews. In 1876 a Ukrainian revolutionary, Sergei Podolskiy, wrote: "In my view Yiddishphobia is as indispensable for every Russian socialist as is hatred of the 'bourgeoisie'." In August 1881, the executive committee of the Narodnaia Vola (People's Will) issued a proclamation denouncing the Jews in unbridled language and calling for pogroms as the first stage in a general revolution. After a meeting in Switzerland with Plekhanov in 1900, Lenin noted that the father-figure of Russian social democracy was

violently opposed to the autonomous existence of the Bund: "He declared straight out that this is not a Social Democratic organization but simply an organization of exploitation - to exploit the Russians. He felt that our goal is to kick the Bund out of the Party, that the Jews are all chauvinists and nationalists, that a Russian (russkai) party must be Russian and not give itself into captivity to the tribe of Gad etc." Revealingly, Plekhanov, in late 1905, granted an interview to Vladimir Jabotinsky (later the founder of the right-wing Zionist Revisionist movement) in which he praised the socialist-Zionist Poalei Zion as "far more consistent than the Bund" and characterized Bundists as "Zionists afraid of seafickness."

At the second congress of the RSDRP in Brussels and London in 1903 Lenin insisted that the place of the Bund in the party must be the first substantive item on the agenda. Jewish non-Bundist delegates joined in the assault on the Bund, among them Trotsky and Martov (who had himself called, in 1895, for "separate organization of the Jewish proletariat"). The Bundists offered far-reaching concessions to preserve party unity, but Lenin was resolved on schism and the Bund was, in effect, driven out of the party. Ironically, Martov, who assisted in the founding-out of the Bundists and the "Economists", thereby lost their crucial votes in the debate with Lenin over the historic issue of party membership. Martov's following collapsed from majority to minority (*men'shinevists*), determining the historical meaning of "Bolshevik" and "Menshevik".

Frankel's treatment of the 1903 congress and its aftermath sheds new light on this turning-point in the history of the Bund and of the Russian socialist movement in general. He argues (*contra* many earlier historians) that "politics rather than ideology determined ideology". Bundist ideology evolved, he suggests, less in response to pressure from below, than in reaction to the exclusionist doctrine of Bolshevism and the competing ideological stimuli of Zionism and internationalism. The Bund reached its political apogee in 1905, but in the revolutionary confusion of the following year it found itself outflanked on left and right and went into decline. Its re-entry into the RSDRP in 1906 was on humiliating terms: not surprisingly, given the virtual castration of the Bund's autonomous existence, Lenin and Stalin moved for its reintegration into the party. But the reintegration was short-lived. The Bund drifted towards Menshevism and retained its distinctive identity until 1917 (in Russia; until the Second War in Poland).

Often regarded as a blind alley of history, the Bund, as Frankel shows, cannot be so lightly dismissed. On through retrospective Zionist blinkers can its emphasis on *Doykhe* (literally "hereness") be regarded as a delusion. The Bund insisted that, whatever the rate of emigration to the USA or Palestine, eastern Europe would remain the home of millions of Jews. Before Hitler this could not be seriously refuted and even the Zionists accepted it. On that premise the Bund attempted to grapple with the real social and intellectual dilemmas of the Jewish masses. No serious political survivor, however before 1917 could predict the seismic shocks of Stalinism and Nazism, and no ideology could be founded on such Cassandra-like expectations. The Bund's policy of seeking cultural autonomy within a socialist society was, for its time, eminently realistic. Summing up the Bund's record, Frankel writes: "Firmly rejecting sectarianism in its internal life, the movement escaped schisms and splits throughout the period from 1895 to 1919. Against the background of theological intolerance that came to dominate the Russian Social Democratic movement this was a remarkable achievement, a demonstration of human decency and common sense in a setting where those qualities were increasingly held in contempt."

If this book were merely an analysis of the Bund it would stand as an exemplary monograph; it attains a larger, magisterial quality by situating the Bund within a panoramic survey of the entire spectrum of movements between socialism and nationalism in this crucial, formative period. Frankel reminds us that we are dealing here with a political sub-culture of international dimensions and significance: ideologies born in Vilna and Minsk spread to the East End of London, the Lower East Side of New York and the swamps of northern Palestine. Frankel's deftly etched portraits of the leading practitioners in the socialist-nationalist debate (Hess, Liberman, Zhitlovsky, Syrkin and Borokhov) are classics of their kind. But Frankel advances beyond narrowly intellectual history to a *tour de force* of sympathetic historical reconstruction in his depictions of the Russo-Jewish world in turmoil in the crises of 1881-82 and 1905-06. No previous historian in English has conveyed so effectively the internal response of Russian Jewry, the popular sense of a world suddenly trembling with terrifying dangers and extraordinary possibilities, and the messianic hopes to which such conditions gave rise.

As Simon 1882 the young Jewish historian, Elion Dubnow, first drew the comparison between these moments of heightened mass political emotion and the hysteria surrounding the appearance in the mid-seventeenth century of the pseudo-Messiah, Shabbatai Tsvi. Without exaggerating the point, Frankel restates the analogy, echoing (at one point suggestively quoting) the work of the late Gershom Scholem on that earlier era of upheaval. The distinctive political reaction of Russian Jewry to acute crises drew upon the inventory of images, intellectual categories and even mystical concepts deeply ingrained in the Jewish mind. In his treatment of this theme Frankel raises the apocalyptic element from a conventional part of historical speech to a real contribution to a larger historical explanation.

In their oratory, their scourging of the societies in which they lived, as in their messianism, Frankel's subjects felt squarely into the prophetic tradition. As for the prognostic aspect of prophecy, their record was, perhaps inevitably, mixed, but we encounter some striking cases of predictive accuracy. The Marxist Zionist, Ber Borokhov, for example, writing in 1905, correctly forecast that the revolt against European imperialism in north Africa, the Middle East, and Persia, would carry in its wake the destruction of the Jewish communities in those countries. When the British Government proposed, in 1903, the establishment of a Jewish settlement in part of what is now Kenya (the so-called "Uganda scheme"), Borokhov wrote: "It can be no doubt that the future of Uganda belongs not to the English but to the Ugandans." Recent melancholy events in the Holy Land were presciently foreshadowed in the writings of several of the Russo-Jewish intelligentsia. Warning of the prospect of a *Kulturkampf* between religious and secular Jews in a Zionist Palestine, the future creator of *Saganato*, L. Zamenhof, wrote in 1882: "On the chaos which will be unleashed in Palestine on the first day of its liberation, one could write entire books." Foretelling even greater perils in the then hill (and now, again) widespread Palestinian Jewish resistance on Arab labour, Menahem Ussishkin in 1904 wrote that such practices meant that "Jewish colonization in Palestine is built on sand or, more accurately, on a volcano."

But the passionate controversies resurrected by Frankel represent less a political almanac than the record of a generation totally preoccupied with an endless debate while, while it deepened questions of human existence, always unfailingly returned to the central issue of national self-determination. The debate was conducted at the highest level of eloquence and insight, and also descended to the lowest points of



A pen-and-ink drawing referring to the Jewish Colonial Association, established by Baron Maurice de Hirsch in 1891. Reproduced from a Jewish iconography, supplementary volume, by Alfred Rubens (128pp. Nonpareil Publishing Company Limited, Albany House, Petty France, London SW1. £19. 0 907940 00 5).

invective and abuse. The standard of repartee which could be attained may be gauged from an exchange (on the usual recurrent theme) between the social democrat, Parvus (Alexander Helphand), and the socialist Zionist, Nachman Syrkin, some time in the 1890s:

Parvus was thundering - as only he could - against the meaninglessness of nationalism. He cited Marx, history, and philosophy... and then he grabbed hold of his own coat and roared: "The wool in this coat was taken from the sheep which were pastured in Angora; it came from Germany; the thread from Austria; is it not clear to you that this world of ours is interlarded with wool? Hands were lifted to applaud and then something unexpected happened... In the fury of gesticulation he had ripped the right elbow... Syrkin, unable to contain himself, rose to his feet and shouted: "And the rip in your sleeve comes from the pogrom in Kiev."

Such, at any rate, was a Zionist's recollection of the incident.

Pursuing the global extensions of Russian Jewish socialism, Frankel devotes considerable space to the ideological and institutional origins of the Palestinian and American Jewish labour movements. The discussion of the Russian roots of Jewish settlement in Palestine provides new insights into the sustaining ideas of the early settlers. A disappointing gap, however, is the absence of a thorough analysis of the thought and influence of A. D. Gordon, exponent of a Tolstoyan "religion of labour", whose ideas and personal example were indelibly stamped on the Zionist labour movement. Frankel's account of the "Uganda" episode (whose importance in determining the future shape of the Zionist enterprise may be compared to the crisis within the Russian Social Democratic Party at the same time) contains interesting information about the passionate controversy over the issue within the Zionist movement. The pro-Ugandan party included many of the leading members of the Yishuv (Palestinian Jewry) among them: almost all the colonists at Rehovot-Zion, one of the oldest colonies. Frankel also shows how the early settlers in Palestine imported from

## Publishing Larkin

By Charles Monteith

"You remind me", Philip said, slowing to fifteen miles an hour and giving me a severe glance, "of a Catholic priest, wondering why little ones aren't making regular appearances." It was somewhere between Hull and Beverley, sometime between *The Whitsun Weddings* and *High Windows*. I had asked if there was any possibility of my seeing a new collection of poems within the next year or two. During the long and immensely enjoyable experience of being Philip's publisher such mortifying moments, have, happily, been rare.

When I joined Faber & Faber in the early 1950s I burned, as most young editors do, with an ambition to live up to the fiction list, and a number of people commended to my attention *A Girl in Winter*, a novel Faber had published in 1947. It was outstanding, its admirers said; and when I read it I agreed. What was happening? they asked. Why had there been no successor? Who is Philip Larkin? These questions sent me to the files and to the book's editor, Alan Pringle (who died in 1977).

It had arrived in May, 1946, introduced by one of those letters, old-world formality and punctilious, which in those days accompanied submissions by A. P. Watt and Son. Terms were agreed; an exchange of correspondence followed between Russell Square and the Public Library, Wellington, Shropshire; the title was changed from *The Kingdom of Winter* to *A Girl in Winter* (Philip's own suggestion). The book was published in 1947, was well reviewed and sold - the wartime book-boom had not yet exhausted itself - nearly 5,000 copies.

Alan Pringle was, of course, delighted and began to enquire about his successor. Philip at first gave him guarded encouragement - "I have

made an infinitely tentative start on another book" (1947). "The novel becomes clearer to me in conception as time to work on it becomes shorter" (1948) - but by 1950 nothing had appeared, so Alan wrote again. To this the reply, dated February 26, 1950, was apologetic, pessimistic and conclusive. "I am afraid that the answer is simply that I have been trying to write novels and failing either to finish them or to make them worth finishing... I am beginning to think of the creative imagination as a fruit-machine on which victories are rare and separated by much vain expense; and represent a rare alignment of mental and spiritual qualities that normally are quite at odds." That seemed to be that.

Nothing more happened until 1953 when I blundered enthusiastically on to the scene. Just as I was about to write I discovered that Philip and I had a friend in common who came, as I did, from Belfast where Philip was by then University Sub-Librarian. My enthusiasm and eager enquiries were conveyed and responded to promptly, courteously but firmly. "My last word to you encouraging firm on the subject of novel writing was a letter to Alan Pringle dated 26 February 1950 which should still be on file. I'm afraid it is still the case. We did meet, you know," he added, "in All Souls, but doubtless you've forgotten."

It came back to me: the light of evening, Hawksmoor's towers, great windows open to the west. A literary party with lions loose in the throng: Kingsley Amis, for example, fresh from the publication of *Lucky Jim*, and Bruce Montgomery, whom I had only recently discovered to be "Edmund Crispin". Among the others was a quiet, spectacled, tall, balding young man - Larkin, I now realized - with whom I had a pleasant conversation by the gas-fire.

In my reply to Philip's letter I said that I'd be happy to read the abandoned novels if he thought that might be a help, but the offer was firmly rejected. "I've been thinking about the creative process a good deal", he wrote, "since I last wrote to your firm; instead of a fruit-machine it now seems to me to be a very delicate balance between what has happened and what one likes to think of as happening, and its function is to restore the balance after inroads have been made on one by reality. So my trouble may be insufficient invasions by reality, whatever that is - unhappiness, I suppose."

Philip's letter ended on a friendly and reassuring note: "I am glad you wrote; it did much to dispel my conception of Faber's as a reproachful father-figure" - but it also made an enquiry, almost as an aside. "I sometimes write poetry, and am submitting a selection (six or seven) to an undergraduate concern called the Fantasy Press... This doesn't worry you does it?" I assured him that it didn't - the option clause in *The Girl in Winter* contract referred only to novels - but it reminded me of a brief exchange of letters in the earlier file. In January 1948 he had submitted, through A. P. Watt, a collection of poems called *In the Grip of Light* (an unpromising title, I thought) and it was returned on February 3. Though Elliot probably looked at it - usually he gave all poetry submissions at least a glance - there was no note by him in the file.

There is nothing more in my own files until 1955, when I received a form from the Marvell Press of Hull - whom I connected with the admirable poetry magazine *Listen* - inviting me to subscribe to a volume called *The Less Deceived*; and I am happy to record that I did. It was

only about then that I first became aware that Philip was a serious poet. I had read "Church Going" in the *Spectator* before *The Less Deceived* appeared and had written to say how much I had liked it; *The Less Deceived* when it arrived (it was published later in 1955) produced more enthusiasm, and I passed it to Elliot who made a benign comment on the margin of my note to him: "Yes - he often makes words do what he wants. Certainly worth encouraging." In my letter I asked Philip if Faber could consider his next collection and he responded as I hoped he would: "I'll remember your very exciting suggestion about F&F when I have another collection - about 1965 I expect! F&F has always been my ideal for poetry naturally."

As we shall see, his prediction about the date of his next volume erred very slightly on the side of pessimism. During the intervening years our correspondence, far from declining in volume, became more frequent, more friendly and more personal. We met fairly regularly - as we still do - in London (on one of his visits to the Lords Test, to meetings of the Arts Council Manuscripts Committee or board meetings of the Poetry Book Society, of which he was eventually elected Chairman), in Hull (where I stayed as his guest in the gloomily splendid Station Hotel) or in Oxford (where he stayed with me in All Souls - a College where he later stayed in his own right as a Visiting Fellow and stays now as a member of Common Room).

In the summer postcards arrived, and continue to arrive, from remote corners of the United Kingdom. (As is well known, he concurs completely with George V's views on Abroad. Once, in a letter thanking me for a lunch at which I had persuaded him, against his better judgment, to eat a Greek meal, he described retinas as

"that interesting wine which tastes of cricket bats".) A postcard from Scotland, a colour photograph of a fox meaningfully eyeing a partridge, and on the reverse: "Do you like this picture of a British author and HM Inspector of Taxes?" from the Lake District, with a picture of a climber swaying dizzily on a rock face. "A quiet week mostly spent doing *The Times* Crossword. This picture might be called *The Ascent of F6 Across*"; from Jura, "George Orwell lived on this island for a bit and I guess this was his view. I imagine it hastened his end"; from Ullswater, "Water-skiing seems to be the thing here - non nobis, Domine."

By this time a current theme had made itself apparent in our correspondence - a series of persistent and somewhat thick-skinned enquiries by me about this next collection of poems. (He was free by now of any option obligation to the Marvell Press). "It is wonderful", he wrote to me in 1962, "to have your occasional enquiries about a new book. They seem like enquiries from God as to how soon I can take up my post as seventy-first harpist. But... what I should like to do is write three or four stronger poems to give the whole thing some weight." He confirmed later that he had broken the news to George Hartley (of the Marvell Press) that the next collection would be offered to Faber; and in June 1963 *The Whitsun Weddings* arrived.

Its critical reception was all that I had hoped for; a first printing of 4,000 was soon exhausted and a reprint was ordered shortly after publication. Some unexpected consequences followed too: "An awful thing - a Professor Lal has written to me from Calcutta highly delighted at my mentioning him in that poem. He sends his own stuff. He runs some

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"There was an old fellow of Kabers," Philip Larkin outside the village near Kirby Stephen, Cumbria (see The First Faber Limerick quoted in Charles Montelli's article).

thing called Writers Workshop. Am I fated to be his contact and his pal? There was a television programme in Jonathan Miller's *Monitor* series; a graduate student at the North Dakota State University of Agriculture and Applied Science wrote a thesis on Philip's work "in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts"; the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry arrived by post.

Other themes began to emerge in our correspondence, one of them the novels of Barbara Pym. Philip, for years a staunch admirer, had mentioned her before; and on Cape's refusal of her latest book in 1965, he steered it firmly in my direction. I enjoyed it, but only mildly - a feeling shared by its other readers. In *Faber & Faber* - and I felt none of the inner excitement a publisher should feel when deciding to take on a new author. We were all, too, inclined to be pessimistic about the number of copies we would sell, if we were to publish it. Philip's disappointment was eloquent and heartfelt.

I feel it is a great shame if ordinary sane novels about ordinary sane people doing ordinary sane things can't find a publisher these days. This is the tradition of Jane Austen and Trollope, and I refuse to believe that no one wants its successors today. Why should I have to choose between spy-rubbish, science-fiction rubbish, Negro-homosexual rubbish, or dope-taking nervous-break-down rubbish? I like to read about people who have done nothing spectacular, who aren't beautiful and lucky, who try to behave well in the limited field of activity they command, but who can see, in little autumnal moments of vision, that the so-called "big" experiences of life are going to miss them; and I like to read about such things presented not with self-pity or despair or romanticism, but with realistic firmness and even humour. That is in fact what the critics call the moral (one of the book. It seems to me the kind of writing a responsible publisher ought to support (that's you Charles).

I explained my reasons again and Philip replied, pacific but unconvinced:

In all her writing I find a continual perceptive attention to detail which is a joy, and a steady background of rueful yet courageous acceptance of things which I think more relevant to life as most of us have to live it, than spies coming in from the cold. I think "development" is a bit of a myth; lots of writers don't develop, such as Thomas Hardy or P. G. Wodehouse, nor do we want them to. That is how I feel about Miss Pym. Recently I read, or in some cases reread, half a dozen of Barbara Pym's novels, including all the later ones; and I realize, sadly but clearly, that in 1965 I made a mistake.

Another topic we corresponded about at length was the republication

of *The North Ship*. At first Philip was hesitant: "They [the poems] are such complete rubbish, for the most part, that I am just twice as unwilling to have two editions in print as I am to have one." The Fortune Press, however, which had first published the book in 1945, continued to advertise and sell a reprint which bore no indication to the purchaser that it was not a genuine first edition; and this, more than anything, diminished Philip's reluctance. Our lawyers advised us that we could safely go ahead if we wanted to; and so we did, with Philip's approval. He enjoyed, I think, writing the introduction which gives a detailed account, both entertaining and scathing, of the book's first publication. On the appearance of the Faber edition there was not the slightest murmur of protest from R. A. Caton, the proprietor of the Fortune Press. Philip had earlier rejected out of hand a suggestion of mine that he should include in this volume those poems in *XX Poems* - a privately printed collection, limited to 100 copies, which he had published in Belfast in 1951 - which had not been subsequently included in *The Less Desirable*. "I... tried very hard to find it in my heart to agree with you. Unfortunately I cannot rid myself of the conviction of what I should say about any of my contemporaries who published a collection along these lines. It would be (if my secretary can bear to type it): 'Now the bastard has made himself a name he reckons he can unload any old crap, and if at the same time I should happen to be a reviewer I should make this view very plain.' My own copy of *XX Poems* is inscribed, 'To Charles, most efficient of friends and kindest of publishers' - which I find faintly worrying."

I had enquired, too, in 1966, if he was following events in Oxford, where Blunden and Lowell were the main contenders for the Chair of Poetry. (Blunden, to my surprise and disappointment, won a landslide victory. "I am really not in sympathy with the event," he wrote. "Surely I am right in thinking that the Chair was originally instituted to try to get some work out of the dons? That is a wonderful idea and one which I would heartily subscribe to. The present convention seems to me regrettably like electing a cow to a chair at an Institute of dairymen.")

In 1972, when Blunden's successor, Roy Fuller, had almost come to the end of his term of office (Blunden had retired early on grounds of ill health), Auden asked me, over dinner at Christ Church, if Philip could be persuaded to stand; and promised his fullest support if he did. Philip's reply was predictable:

Your letter about the Chair of Poetry was immensely flattering. To know that Auden is willing to nominate me is the biggest compliment I have been paid for many years. I only wish I felt his confidence was justified, or could do something to justify it. But as you well know - and you know me - a good deal better than Auden

does - I have really very little interest in poetry in the abstract; I have never lectured about it, or even written about it to any extent, and I know that I could never produce anything worthy of such a distinguished office and audience. The effort of trying to do so, moreover, would make my life hell for five years, and almost certainly stop me writing anything else, which would be (at least in my view) a disadvantage.

About *All What Jazz*, his next book, he professed even greater pre-publication gloom than usual. "I think the best line you can take," he wrote, "is that you are inspiring a freak publication: please don't put it forward as a piece of scholarship or even as any sort of contribution to the field. Treat it like a book by T. S. Eliot on all-in-wrestling." Despite this modesty, I approached him soon afterwards for advice when we were thinking about commissioning a life of Louis Armstrong. My enquiry produced two foolscap pages of combined erudition and enthusiasm. "It is already accepted - or if it isn't it soon will be - that Louis Armstrong was an enormously important cultural figure in our century, more important than Picasso in my opinion but certainly quite comparable in stature..." The letter proceeded with much pertinent and well-informed advice but the idea, alas, never came to anything, either because someone else was already at work on such a book or because we were unable to secure the collaboration of a suitable American publisher.

In 1972 and 1973 I thought I had detected the first signs of a new collection in the offing - most notably "The Building" in the *New Statesman* and "The Old Fools" in the *Listener* - and at the beginning of

June, 1973, *High Windows* arrived. Soon we were planning a reading on publication day, though not, of course, by Philip, who remained adamant in his refusal to perform in public. He hesitated about giving his blessing:

I am not keen on poetry readings... I think they belong to the *demi-monde* of poetry. If you held one, it would be difficult for me not to attend it, and I am inclined to think that, unless one is extremely impressive in the flesh (like Bernard Shaw or Rupert Brooke), one gets more dividends from keeping out of sight, as people's imaginary picture of you is always so much more flattering than the reality. Nor do I think that new poems - unfamiliar poems - reap the full benefit of public reading. People don't know them and find it hard to follow them.

Despite these misgivings the reading was highly successful, though unfortunately Philip at the last moment was unable to come. The book's reception by the critics ensured - for us it was a record for a volume of new verse - that we sold out a first printing of 6,000 in three weeks. Since *High Windows* appeared Philip's fame has grown steadily, a fact witnessed not only by the increasing number of critical studies of his work but also by such straws in the wind as a woman advertising in the *New Statesman* for a "helpmate" who confided that she was a lover of "trees, tams and the latest Larkin"; and the quotation in the 1976 edition of *The International Sex Manual's* *Diary* of the first three lines of "Annus Mirabilis". (The editor of this publication, a Miss Tuppy Owen, BSc, sent Philip an aspidochelone with a note saying that since his "stuffy pub-

lishers" might not pass on the fee they had extracted she felt he should have this instead. The plant continues to flourish in Hull where it is known as The Owen Bequest.)

Our correspondence continues as enjoyably and regularly as ever. Fairly recently it included, on the back of a postcard showing a killed Scot tossing the caber, The Second Faber Limerick:

I hope games like tossing the caber  
Are never indulged in at Faber.  
To balance a column  
Of cash is more solemn  
And much more rewarding a labour!

The First Faber Limerick, written years before, was inspired by his chance passing through a village in Westmorland called Kabers which, he realized, provided the perfect rhyme. (See the photograph reproduced here.)

There was an old fellow of Kabers,  
Who published a volume with Faber.  
When they said: "Join the club?"  
He ran off to the pub -  
But Charles called, "You must love your neighbour."

The somewhat obscure third and fourth lines Philip explained as "fillers" to be replaced more specifically as occasion demanded. For example:

When they said "Meet Ted Hughes",  
He replied, "I refuse",  
or

When they said, "Meet Thom Gunn",  
He cried, "God, I must run",  
and so on.

And next? Time will show. I know better now than to ask when a new collection is likely to arrive.

All quotations © Philip Larkin. This article forms a chapter in Larkin at Sixty edited by Anthony Thwaite, to be published by Faber on May 21 and reviewed shortly in the TLS.

## Firm before family

By Nigel Cross

DAVID UNWIN

*Fifty Years with Father: A Relationship*  
150pp. George Allen and Unwin.  
£8.95  
0 04 920065 8

Perhaps it is gratifying to be master of all you survey - especially if you know you have been honest, upright and righteous; especially if you are Sir Stanley Unwin whose publishing company, built up from scratch, was the envy of the English-speaking world; he published Britain's only worthy Nobel laureate for literature, Bertrand Russell. He owned a handsome Victorian estate in Hampshire, played a mean game of tennis, and had a loving family. The stories about his past money were legion, but he preferred to call it carefulness or business acumen. Those who envied his achievements accused him, to no avail, of egotism and monomania.

If David Unwin has attempted to write an affectionate memoir of his father, complete with book-trade anecdotes to humour retired and nostalgic bookmen, he has only partially succeeded. He has written a much better book than that, charged with

filial resentment as well as affection. *Fifty Years with Father* inevitably invites comparison with Edmund Gosse's masterpiece of retribution *Father and Son*.

When his father died in 1968 aged eighty-three, David, like other fond children, found himself "suddenly alone, without a hand-hold". But as well as the conventional sense of bereavement he felt relief, "I was fifty years old, the final barrier had been removed and there was nothing to stop me now from at all times being totally and thoughtlessly myself." Stanley Unwin would have been hurt to discover that he was a barrier, a "vehement" man possessed of a "pulverising quality", "difficult and overpowering". Not only would he have disapproved of his son's book, which is certainly not an exercise in hagiography, but he would have completely failed to understand it. As his own autobiography makes clear, he was convinced that he had run his family as efficiently as his business.

Stanley Unwin was born into books. His father's company printed them, his mother's family, the Spicers, were publishers. As a young man he joined T. Fisher Unwin, his uncle and head of the family publishing business, whose authors included Conrad, Wells and Yeats. In 1914 Stanley set up on his own by buying the old firm of George Allen. If books were in his blood so

were Nonconformism and tea. David Unwin recounts that his father had a special relationship with God; "many were the dramatic personal interventions made by the Almighty on behalf of Stanley Unwin". With such a friend, he was usually, if not always, in the right. This had dismal consequences for his wife Mary, who is the heroine of her son's book. She had to bow to her husband's wishes in almost every domestic matter. Neither friends nor drink were allowed in the Unwin house. "My wife and I", wrote Sir Stanley, "have never been particularly interested in social activities." "How blandly he links my mother in with him!" comments David, "yet she was not by nature abstemious, indeed she came from a relaxed and convivial home. Before she married she had a... lively interest in her fellow humans, an interest my father not only did not share but, already in 1913, was doing his best to suppress."

Stanley's uncompromising selfishness, his wife's self-confidence was "permanently undermined". Like David, however, Lady Unwin "blissed wonderfully" after her husband's death. In common with many men of his generation Stanley was never in any doubt that women obeyed men. The other woman in his family, his daughter, was relegated to the nursery and always "came off second best".

But it was not just the women who allowed themselves to be bullied. David, although a sensitive and sickly boy, was the apple of his father's eye. With a complete disregard for his talents and inclinations Stanley showed him into the publishing business - Unwin and Son. Sadly for Stanley, David managed to escape his carefully planned fate to become a writer of novels and children's stories and, eventually, of this moving portrait of life with his father.

David Unwin does not entirely fail in his duty. His father's publishing skills, integrity, vitality and often engaging eccentricity are recorded with both affection and admiration. From his son's account, made more convincing by a dash of sharp, even bitter criticism, Stanley Unwin was a good, decent man and by orthodox standards even a great one. But the greatness of the eminent publisher has now been placed firmly in the context of those people who helped him achieve it and who had to put up with him - his loving, browbeaten family.

Hubert Moore

## Act of Improvidence

They tried drinking, of course, and having children annually; they even tried selling their oldest daughter. Finally, Tess of the D'Urbervilles found her parents eating their seed potatoes.

Most years I get mine in the soil by mid-April; during June go over them line by line searching gradually higher their bony potential; in late August fill sacks of them for winter.

This year, though, this poem, I've been as improvident as possible. It's only November: I've nothing to say already. Come home soon, daughter; be appalled, good practical daughter.

## POLITICS

# Overthrowing the throne

By Hamid Enayat

NIKKI R. KEDDIE

*Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran*

321pp. Yale University Press. £21 (paperback, £4.15).  
0 300 02606 4

MOHAMED HEIKALI

*The Return of the Ayatollah: The Iranian Revolution from Mossadeq to Khomeini*  
217pp. Deutsch. £9.95.  
0 233 97404 0

JOHN D. STEMPEL

*Inside the Iranian Revolution*  
336pp. Indiana University Press. Distributed by International Book Distributors. £10.50.  
0 253 14200 8

Every major revolution - including that which took place in Iran in 1978-79 - confronts students of history with the question of how to distinguish its real causes. For authors of a scholarly bent the answer is fairly simple; all one has to do is select a reasonably long period preceding the revolution, and then concentrate on a number of discernible economic, social, political and cultural trends at work therein. The length of the period selected depends on the author's specialized knowledge and on the availability of sources. Obviously, there has to be more emphasis on the phase immediately before the revolution when all these long-standing trends supposedly come to fruition. Establishing the causal relation between these and the final upheaval is then regarded as a matter of common sense.

The difficulty with this approach is that historical reality is sometimes far from susceptible to neat analysis, being made up of ingredients not easily explicable in terms of a straightforward causation. Not only are there such imponderables as traits of personal character, human vagaries and bizarre conjunctions of events; but there are also, at times, sheer insoluble cruces.

Most of the books now appearing on the Iranian Revolution deal mainly with discernible trends and causes of the first kind. Despite their different backgrounds, the three authors reviewed here display a common urge to find an explanation, historical or otherwise, for every seemingly puzzling feature of the Revolution. Each has his own perspective. As a journalist, Mohamed Heikal depicts fleeting moments of the Revolution, registering facts and faces which in the main have already changed beyond recognition, but are nevertheless essential for understanding later events. As a career diplomat who served in Iran during this period and had contact with some of the protagonists, John D. Stempel describes events as seen from the American

Embassy in Tehran, while revealing some of the daunting dilemmas faced by the Carter administration in its relations with the ex-Shah. Finally, as a noted historian, Nikki Keddie traces the Revolution back to the economic, social, political and cultural evolution of Iranian society since the beginning of the nineteenth century - if not earlier.

Between them, the three books contain the elements for a comprehensive study of the Revolution, accounting as they do for all the categories of causes that went into its making - essential as well as accidental, institutional as well as psychological. It is only when each author attempts to achieve comprehensiveness single-handedly that more questions are raised than answered. Had Professor Keddie given more attention to the twentieth century, or Mr Stempel focused mainly on the intricacies of American policy, and had Mr Heikal avoided digressions into history and theology, we would have had three superb studies of three important aspects of the Revolution: its background, its external dimension, and its birth pangs.

The most persuasive parts of Keddie's book are those which show some of the reasons for the inherent weakness of the *ancien régime* in Iran. Although it draws largely on material collected by others, it gives a lucid account of the régime's ill-conceived economic policies together with their disastrous social consequences. What is more valuable, in certain cases Keddie discusses some of the alternative policies which the régime could have pursued and which would perhaps have averted or postponed its downfall. Once again we learn from her analysis that the vulnerability of the Pahlavi state arose not only from its inability to establish channels of genuine communication with the people, but also from the deepening inequalities that it deliberately fostered as part of its grand strategy for economic development. For instance, the Government encouraged extremely large profits for both domestic and foreign companies on the grounds that "in early stages of development, income distribution must worsen, and that those at the top of the scale should be favoured since they save and invest more than those at the bottom". Many governments all over the world breed discontent among their subjects, but few would make a dogma out of it, although this dogma, as Keddie shows, has to be set against a background of the régime's race for greater size, military strength, and modernity, with its concomitants of unemployment, waste, corruption and poverty. She seems reluctant to discuss any of the positive results of the régime's policies in agriculture and industry, to which she refers only in passing. She seems to be more impressed by official moves towards female emancipation.

Without some adequate assessment of these positive achievements not only is an account of recent

Iranian history incomplete, but also the rapid growth and success of the revolutionary movement in 1978-79 becomes less understandable. The Revolution can be explained in one of three ways. First, the régime had dug its own grave not only by its failure to ensure social justice and a fair degree of political participation, but also by the success of some of its policies of modernization - the spread of education, a better communication system, foreign travel, a flourishing publishing industry despite censorship, and the growing number of educational institutions, factories and offices, without which the popular uprising would have been far more difficult to organize. Second, the royalist *debâche* was largely due to a collapse of morale among the ruling groups - not only had the ex-Shah lost the will to fight because of either personal failings or mortal illness (a factor which figures with varying emphasis in the analyses of all three authors), but also the majority of influential bureaucrats and tycoons had no stomach for the fight, paralysed as they were by a guilt-complex born of their ill-gotten gains. Third, the revolutionary movement was predominantly religious, and although it was a response to specific social and political grievances, it would have succeeded

## Nationalist reformatory

By Dennis Duncanson

J. A. FYFIELD

*Re-educating Chinese Anti-Communists*  
117pp. Croom Helm. £10.95.  
0 7059 1017 7

Is brainwashing a violation of human rights? Yes, but what is a totalitarian, revolutionary régime to do instead with its vanquished enemies? Shoot them? The record of China's changes of dynasty in imperial times was mostly benign: captive generals and officials were invited to serve the incoming rulers. Loyal ex-mandarin who declined were allowed to go home. But then, in no instance did a new dynasty try to either revolutionary or totalitarian - all of them legitimated their advent to power by claiming to restore traditional institutions and liberal standards. The Communist conquest was no mere dynastic change: Mao Tse-tung's radical ambition was to "transform the thought" of the whole people - to breed a New Socialist Man with the proletarian outlook laid down by Marx and Engels for the working class in Europe.

In 1949, the majority of the Nationalist establishment were taken over by the People's Republic; a minority of intellectuals were singled out for liquidation, as deterrent examples, in the "liberalization" of

even in their absence, just as, almost a century ago, the Mahdi's revolt in the Sudan triumphed over a superior enemy without enjoying any of the advantages of the Islamic movement in the Iran of the 1970s. Keddie's book pays a good deal of attention to the religious factor, and includes, indeed, a special chapter on it, by Yann Richard. But again the underlying assumption, which is shared by the other two authors here, is that the religious upsurge was the result of the Pahlavi policy of de-Islamization, which left the opposition no option but to resort to tradition and Islamic authenticity. However plausible, this argument obscures one crucial element in the genesis of the Revolution - its highly personalized leadership as represented by the charisma of Ayatollah Khomeini. The whole movement of opposition to the régime would have taken a different, and possibly non-revolutionary, path without his stewardship of the final phase. That is why, until that final phase, and indeed until the concluding months of 1978, although many people in Iran predicted some sort of upheaval as a direct consequence of the régime's faults, few foresaw a revolution - except, of course, a minority with a metaphysical faith in the transience of justice, or a historicist confidence in the triumph

of Right. The failure to understand Khomeini's personality and ideas has been at the root not only of foreign misconceptions about the Revolution, but also of the plight of the Left and the liberals in Iran itself.

Heikal's book is more useful in this respect, since it provides a more intimate portrayal of Khomeini as well as of other revolutionary leaders. He is also much more sympathetic to the Iranians than the other two authors, seeing the Revolution (rather benignly) as a natural continuation of the nationalist struggle of the Musaddiq era (1951-53). But Heikal fails to appreciate the role of the religious opposition to Musaddiq in the overthrow of his government. Both Heikal and Stempel devote considerable space to the last-minute attempts made by the Americans either to save the monarchy or to bring about a compromise between the régime and its opponents. Their versions disagree on some important details concerning the form and the timing of American interference. The cynics would no doubt seize on this point as proof of a possible, fourth explanation of the Revolution - that external manipulation played a considerable part in its success. But we need more solid evidence before we can judge the truth of that claim.

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There have been several accounts over the years of brainwashing in China, in and out of prison, and of conditions for delinquent Party members. For the late Eric Chou, the process was a grim polishing up of a cadre under no suspicion of deviation or disloyalty beyond working in Hong Kong; Robert Lifton analysed the psychological effects of physical bullying on foreigners captured at Liberation; Amnesty International's *Report on Political Imprisonment* probed the judicial and punitive details of China's gulag, but seems not to have heard of Fushan and Pyfield's Nationalists. These last all agree that they were not knocked about and had good food and plenty of exercise; the official publicity photograph on the dust cover (the only one in the book) presents a picture of a "re-education seminar" relaxing in sunny serenity. Comparatively, it is true, the whole population of China has been confined to

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Hannah Arendt is to be the subject of a BBC radio programme on 21 May.

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Icehouse Lights

David Wojahn

Winner of the 1981 Yale Series of Younger Poets Competition  
Cloth £6.95. Paper £3.45

Yale University Press

13 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JP



# Mythmaker to the tribe

By Peter Hebblethwaite

**ZAMON DUFFY** (Editorial: *Challoner and His Church* A Catholic Bishop in Georgian England 202pp. Darton, Longman and Todd. £9.50. 0 232 51527 1

Of Bishop Richard Challoner (1691-1781) it may justly be said that he opened the boring for English Catholics in the eighteenth century. His office of "Apostolic Vicar" - forerunner of that of Archbishop of Westminster - meant that he was theoretically responsible for half the country, not to mention the colonies of North America and the West Indies and, eventually, Canada as well. It was an impossible task.

Challoner was consecrated Bishop on January 29, 1741, feast of St Francis de Sales, whom he admired as the model of the post-Tridentine Bishop. His rule over the turbulent English Catholics thus lasted for forty years. "Rule" puts it too strongly. His powers were few. He was constantly at odds with the nine ambassadors who, when not at war, allowed their embassy chapels to be used as parish churches for the 20,000 Catholics of London. He hired the chaplains, some of whom were drunken sots. One was certainly married. Things were no better in the provinces where the Catholic gentry claimed the right to appoint their own chaplains. And to make matters worse, half of Challoner's clergy were religious. There were some Benedictines and Franciscans, but most of them were Jesuits whom Challoner did not like. It was a disarming scene. In 1780 the Gordon anti-popey riots erupted and caused 285 deaths. Challoner retired to the country with his most gloomy forebodings confirmed.

Bishop Challoner was an important historical figure. But equally clearly, he was a full man of average abilities. This is what most of the nine authors of this commemorative volume are really saying. (One-third of them, including the editor, are from Magdalene College, Cambridge: a combination-room plot?) Zamon Duffy notes that unlike his contemporary Charles Wesley, Challoner "had little enterprise; faced with a difficult pastoral situation his instinct was to stick to the rules or to ask for guidance from Rome". Duffy's comments on his style are trenchant and revealing. Challoner wrote a prodigious number of works in his life - mostly devotional works like *Think well on't* or controversial tracts like *The Unerring Authority of the Catholic Church in Matters of Faith and Conscience* against the Methodists. As can be seen, he was no pioneer of the "ecumenical movement". His style, says Duffy, is that of a first-rate jolting carpenter in command of his tools, but disapproving of imaginative frills. Richard Luckett, a literary critic, confirms this judgment and pronounces Challoner's style to be "functional". He compares him, somewhat improbably, with V. I. Lenin, "whose style is devoid of literary graces and wholly uninteresting from an aesthetic or even a technical point of view".

In addition to having a boring style, Challoner could be exceedingly obstinate. This is indicated by Geoffrey Holt, SJ, who makes the point, through the following admirable list: "He was clearly a saintly man and a man of zeal, but also, is not uncommon with saintly, zealous men, a man of strongly held opinions." Challoner, all nine authors tell us, was admirable but limited. He regarded Anglicans and Dissenters as potential material for conversion; otherwise he did not meet them. He was utterly dedicated and totally humourless. Duffy writes: "He had no interests outside religion." His dying word was "charity", by which he did not mean that episode of which St Paul speaks but the money for the poor he had in his pocket. To call him "conservative" would be a grotesque understatement.

ment. His whole apologetic case rested on conservatism: where, he asked, was Mr Luther's Church before the Reformation, and if it had not existed, how could God's promises of being with his Church to the end of time be fulfilled? As Sheridan Gilley puts it: "It was not, however, Challoner's aim to originate or create anew. Rather, in a dry season, he sought to preserve his well." Curious though the expression is, it hits off the essential Challoner.

So perhaps the explanation of the importance of Challoner is that he simply happened to be there and in charge in an age when tolerance was growing and the penal laws were fast becoming a dead letter. But there is little evidence that Challoner perceived what was going on or read the signs of the times with any perspicacity. John Bossy's superb chapter on the Marriage Act of 1753 shows Challoner to have been completely at sea. The Act, designed to prevent "clandestine marriages", said that the local Anglican vicar should act as registrar in the case of all marriages. Bossy argues that this was a concession that Challoner could have made, given that in Catholic theology the spouses are themselves the true ministers of the sacrament and that the vicar would have been acting in a civil capacity merely. This poses the wider question: were English Catholics to choose the path of assimilation to society generally; or were they aggressively to assert their difference? Challoner chose the latter course. His policy was continued until Cardinal Basil Hume (who provides an introduction to this book) succeeded Cardinal John Carroll in 1780.

Challoner provided the English Catholic "tribe" with its myths. He wrote the *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*. He had difficulty fitting the Jesuits into the heroic story. It was ironic that he should appeal to the spirit of the Elizabethan martyrs at the very moment when martyrdom (Gordon riots apart) was an extremely unlikely prospect. On this nearly all our authors do a double shuffle. They are members of the new generation of Catholic historians, tough and outspoken, lay rather than clerical, inspired by Jean Delumeau rather than by Fr Herbert Thurston, SJ. They detect in Challoner's forty years' transition to the new and more vital and varied Catholicism that was to come in the nineteenth century, when the Irish potato famine supplied the Indian masses and the Oxford Movement provided the defuncting Church of England chiefs. Challoner, one suspects, would have been utterly bewildered, and would have understood neither Cardinal Manning nor Cardinal Newman.

## West Marchers

By Claire Cross

**SCOTT MICHAEL HARRISON** *The Pilgrimage of Grace in the Lake Counties, 1536-7* 160pp. Royal Historical Society. £13 (Available to members direct from Swift Printers (Publishing) Ltd, 1-7, EC4A 3RE, £8.) 0 901030 81 4

Although almost half a century has elapsed since the publication of the monumental work by M. H. and R. Dodds, historians have only relatively recently begun considering the causes of the Pilgrimage of Grace and the revolts in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire to de-molish the Pennines, however, have not previously received the same analysis, a neglect which this scholarly monograph goes far to remedy.

In the early Tudor period the countries of Westmorland and Cumberland with north Lancashire constituted a veritable dark corner of the land, geographically isolated,

But as Cardinal Wiseman noted in an article in the *Dublin Review*, Challoner had supplied English Catholics with everything they needed: devotional works, handbooks of meditations, treatises on moral questions, a new translation of the Bible (best forgotten), controversial works to help them refute the Protestants, and heroic folk-tales about "our fathers chained in prisons dark" who were "still in heart and conscience free". Fr Frederick Faber's hymn captures the nonconformist spirit of English Catholicism before emancipation. Wiseman was writing in 1842. Challoner was read and re-read for about a hundred years after his death. Then he ceased to be read and ceased to be an influence.

If there is one exception to this rule, it is *The Garden of the Soul* published into the 1960s. Like most of Challoner's work it was a compilation and extremely practical. It was addressed to Catholics "of the middling sort".

A study of the anti-intellectual nature of the education given to English secular priests at the college in Douai where Challoner was student and professor for twenty-five years confirms that science was subordinated to spirituality. The students copied down notes dictated by their professors, and were advised to keep them to hand for future controversial use when they went "on the mission" (ie, back home to England). The students of Douai were more famous for their spectacular binges than for their application to study. Michael Sharritt reports on their rebellion in 1689. They were a quarrelsome lot. They were aggressively John Bullish. Most of them disclaimed to learn French. As Luckett perceptively notes, the English Catholics of the eighteenth century were cut-off not only from the mainstream of English culture but also from the European culture that ought, in theory, to have been their compensation for belonging to a universal rather than a national Church. But Roderick O'Donnell shows that Anglicans had better contacts with baroque architecture than Roman Catholics ever did.

It is a reasonable bet that Pope John Paul will make some reference to the work of Bishop Challoner should his visit to this country go ahead this month. He will speak of the two-hundredth anniversary of Challoner's death - last year - and of his significance for English Catholicism. He would be well advised to read this book in order to avoid the more obvious pitfalls. It would also persuade him, if he need be, that the romantic nostalgia of *Brideshead Revisited* does not exhaust the rich potential of English Catholicism.

## The burgesses' beliefs

By Edward Playfair

**MICHAEL LYNCH** *Edinburgh and the Reformation* 416pp. Edinburgh: John Donald. £18. 0 85976 069 3

This interesting book is a product of the academic age of gold: a palmary example of pure research for its own sake or, at least, for the sake of a doctorate. Michael Lynch tells us that it was twelve years in the making. It was not inspired by local patriotism, but by suggestion in London from A. G. Dickens that this was a worthwhile subject. The author duly gained his PhD, aided by numerous grants. Rothschild need not worry, since the SSRC, which he is now examining, was not among the contributors. Further grants enabled the book to be published, most handsomely and with full detail, at a reasonable price; and Dr Lynch is now a lecturer in Scottish History at Edinburgh, one hopes with tenure. It is an excellent pre-Joseph story with a happy ending.

Edinburgh at the time of the Reformation was the largest burgh in Scotland and in other respects the most important. It had the Castle at one end, the Canongate (not then part of the burgh) and Holyrood at the other, and lawyers living in between. It was subject to political and religious pressures of every kind. Lynch's purposes is to show what effect these pressures had on the burgesses and council of Edinburgh and how they reacted to them. He covers, with certain deliberate gaps, the period from the 1550s to 1585, and his major tool here is the book's real originality, its prodigious use of primary sources. He has tracked down burgh after burgh with their often influential wives, and so far as possible he has identified their craft, career, offices, wealth and religious and political sympathies. At the climactic point of the civil war between the Queen's party in Edinburgh and the King's in Leith, he believes that he has traced about three-quarters of the Queen's party (easier to run down because when they were defeated action was taken against them) and one-quarter of the King's. It is a fine achievement, and thanks to his publishers and those grants, several of the lists on which he bases his work and a number of Who's Whos are set out for the use of future historians in more than 160 pages of appendices.

Dr Lynch hopes that his work will upset a number of myths. It should do so, because his findings are more detailed than anything done before; and, though infinitely complicated in detail, are in general what one might expect. Individual status, interest, motive, practice and belief varied widely. Some combinations are unexpected, like the views of one burgess, brought up a Catholic like everyone else, who said that he was convinced by the doctrine of the reformed church, but that nothing would persuade him to take its communion. One thing which Lynch uses, in words which Lynch quotes from Calderwood, their devoted to the "religion of Edinburgh... their particular".

From early on there was a Protestant Militant Tendency and ill-fated late there were a number of private Catholics and more Catholics. Wives, not personally responsible for the governance of the burgh, were often more extreme in either direction. The middle ground in the Council tried to keep the balance, more by inclusion than by exclusion: there was never a movement to expel Militant, but their numbers were limited. Even during the civil war, some merchants lent money to both sides; but in the long run the victory of the King's party led to greater uniformity. The impression one gets is that of A. C. Benson's remark: "Insects, when a stone was lifted, process looks, and a great waste of energy, one knows perfectly well that they dislike interference, want their stone back, and prefer to go on boiling unseen."

The first myth, therefore, that Lynch wants to suppress is that of simplicity and uniformity: a regular progress towards a godly society. The leaders of the burgh, until war came and they had to take sides, did their best, quite successfully, to accommodate in the burgh's interest with whatever rulers they had. The second is the more celebrated myth of John Knox as the leader of Edinburgh Protestants, a myth which he propagated with vigour. That he was a national leader and propagandist is undoubted, and Edinburgh was proud to have him as its minister. But, as minister of Edinburgh, his record is rather less impressive. For one thing, he was often not there: sometimes he left on preaching tours and sometimes because he had to. When he was in Edinburgh, his intransigence often embarrassed those Protestant burgesses whose job it was to accommodate. They tended to go their middle and conservative way, leaving him to Militant. To quote the old proverb which one of Lynch's characters used in another context, from the burgh's point of view it was like the shearing of hogs: much cry but little wool. Knox was the blunderbuss, the real sharp-shooter, Andrew Melville, does not come directly into this Edinburgh story, though his influential views emerge as an issue towards the end.

This is not an easy book to read. In spite of a wave of the hand in the foreword to "the ordinary reader" it is a specialized treatment of a narrow subject. It is densely written, and Lynch takes for granted a thorough prior knowledge of the general Scottish history of the period and of burgh and kirk session organization. It is a political, not an institutional, history, with sudden and hardly explained gaps where there is nothing much to say about Edinburgh, as distinct from national, political, or example, great and fascinating detail about 1559, where he has dug up much new material, and an excellent account of the civil war between Edinburgh and Leith in 1571-2, but hardly anything about the period between 1587 and 1590, which covers the abdication, defeat, and flight of Queen Mary and the regency and murder of Moray; stirring stuff, but mostly outside Edinburgh. On the institutional side, no account is given of the decreet-arbitral of April 1583 which gave the burgh a revised constitution, or of its immediate breach by the King although he had acted as overman of the arbitration; important as this event was; it occurred right at the end of Dr Lynch's story. Primarily, therefore, this is a book for specialists, among whom it should give rise to useful discussion.

## The Parnassian pedigree

By Philip Sherrard

**C. A. TRYPANIS** *Greek Poetry From Homer to Seferis* 896pp. Faber. £25. 0 571 08346 3

The theme of the continuity of Greek culture has preoccupied countless scholars, travellers, dilettantes and eccentrics at large, Greek and non-Greek, at least since the time when Gemistos Plethon began to dream of establishing a new state of the Hellenes in the heart of the Peloponnese in the years shortly preceding the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453. Where non-Greeks are concerned, this preoccupation has been coloured, even conditioned, by their vision of classical Greece and so by their determination both to find traces of what they have taken to be ancient Greek civilization in the modern Greek world and to foist this vision on to the modern Greeks themselves. In the case of the Greeks, it has tended to have the more practical aim of constructing an image of what constituted their national identity, although the terms in which for the most part they have attempted to do this history have been in promoting among them the notion that Hellas is the norm and exemplar of Western civilization.

Naturally, the constitutive features of this ancient Hellas have themselves depended upon the criteria of relevance that scholars have chosen to apply and so have shifted from generation to generation; and these shifts in their turn have bedevilled the efforts of Greeks to establish their identity according to a consistent model. It is indicative of this bedevilling that the so-called Constitution of Epidauros, issued in 1822, one year after the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, was written in a form of Greek that only a handful of Western-educated Greek intellectuals could fully understand, and proposed for the renaissance Greece a polity based on what was thought to be that of Athens in the fifth century BC.

In one sense, C. A. Trypanis's massive work is evidence that preoccupation with this cultural continuity is far from being a thing of the past. It does not mean by this that it is a work of ethnic propaganda, or is filled with that kind of sentimental ancestor-worship that has long been denounced by so many Greek writers, or does anything so silly as to suggest that the quality of poetry must be assessed according to classical standards, whatever these may be. In fact, Professor Trypanis is perhaps over-cautious in his concern not to make any claim that could be attributed to an overt and simplistic chauvinism. But the opening sentence of his preface, in which he speaks of "that long, uninterrupted course" which Greek poetry has followed from Homer to the present day, as well as his later statements that "Greek poetry constitutes the longest uninterrupted tradition of the Western world" and that Homer "constitutes the longest uninterrupted educational tradition in the Western world", all demonstrate how tenacious and compelling the theme of cultural continuity continues to be. It is not that these statements are untrue. But implicit in them is an assertion of a historical perspective that gives the concept of Hellenism a significance which links the ancient, medieval and modern Greek worlds, and so provides a kind of charter in accordance with which the pedigree

of Greek cultural identity over a period of three thousand years can be affirmed.

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There is only one place where I disagree strongly with this sensible little book, and that is the opening sentences of its Introduction: "If Greek historical writing were as much like ours as we sometimes think, it would be possible to write for Greek poets the careful explanatory biographies that are now being written for nineteenth-century authors. We would know what the poets read and studied, and how they learned to compose verse; what their families were like, where they travelled and when." We would be able to judge with some accuracy why they wrote what they did. But no amount of such circumstantial information, true or false, will ever explain why a poet wrote what he did. That is the very same false pretence which Lefkowitz so relentlessly exposes in the ancient *Lives* - their claim that they can explain the universal and creative and poetic by elaborating the local and temporal particulars of the poet's life. Having called the bluff of the ancient *Lives*, should not have fallen for the presumptuous sales talk of the modern rubbers who claim to "account for" literary achievement. By showing how the author had the same kinds of experience as you and I with parents, schooling, marriage etc, the biographer has precisely failed to explain the creativity and timelessness which make the artist different from all the others. Literary biography remains a fascinating but very minor form of history, with little to offer literary studies.

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Lawrence": "Sir, - I know from personal practice that the late Bloomsbury Backbite was/was not a sodomite/Leavistie" etc.

Much ancient poetry has likewise been read by the marshlight of what people thought they knew about the poets' lives. Sophocles was pious, Euripides unorthodox and so forth. A growing scepticism has now led to *The Lives of the Greek Poets* where Mary Lefkowitz looks hard at the biographies of nine major poets - Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus, Aristophanes and Callimachus - and of a handful of lesser names. It is a careful searching look, and the "Lives" crumble before it. Not a lot is as fabulous as the story that Pindar fell asleep on Helicon and awoke to find that bees had made a honeycomb in his mouth, but enough is definitely fictional to throw serious doubt on nearly all the rest. The details are drawn, above all, from the poet's own work (the very work they are then supposed to illuminate); thus, for example, Homer narrows avoids being savaged by a gausher's dogs, just like Odysseus with the dogs of Eumaeus. Other material comes from the fantasies of comedy, such as the report that the women of Athens plotted at the Theomophoria against Euripides. Some anecdotes seem to be no more than the kind of thing which ought to have happened to a particular author. Standard motifs often supply a sack which needs stuffing, however fanciful: the child prodigy, professional rivalries, isolation or exile, violent death. Some of the familiar "facts" may even be true - we happen to have an inscription showing that Sophocles came from Colonus so that it is not merely an inference from his *Oedipus at Colonus* - but Lefkowitz has administered a large dose of the antidote to credulity.

Modern biographies of writers, of both verse and prose, have grown out of mere "introductions" and become volumes in their own right. I sometimes have the nightmarish impression that everyone in the metropolitan world of letters is writing literary biography, that they fill the bookshops while the poetry shelf diminishes, that the *TLS* is a Supplement swollen with gossip while six volumes of new verse are squeezed into a short notice. By diligent nosing I have identified the Dark Lord of the Hobbis as an aircraftman called Ross, one-time lover of D. H.

Many readers, face to face with a page of great poetry, panic like one marooned on an unknown planet. To find the bearings which show them that they are after all safe at home on Earth, they tend to look to a "biography" of the poet, not a social and intellectual history of his times but anecdotes about his childhood, his friends, sex life, financial difficulties, divorces and death. One might well regard this craving for little-tattle as recourse to the dummy rather than the strong milk of literature; but the failing is nothing new. In antiquity it was standard practice for a work of literature to be accompanied by at least one *Vita*, and these are pre-fabricated prominently to the early printings of the classics; and as vernacular authors gained recognition they too had to acquire *Lives*. The biography presented as a necessary preliminary to opening the poetry. While at the hands of a Dr Johnson the genre might rise from the mire, it has generally remained at the same gummy level as the Greek precursors (which are usefully translated as appendices to Mary Lefkowitz's new book).

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he would recognize as belonging to the Greek poetic tradition is "the just correlation of the physical and the spiritual world". In the terms in which he conceives this criterion he could well argue that Homer and Seferis belong to the same tradition. But by virtue of the same criterion he would be bound to exclude from participation in the Greek poetic tradition at least half the poets that Trypanis, with his purely linguistic criterion, identifies as its members. And, correspondingly, he might feel obliged to include among those writing in the Greek poetic tradition poets who do not write in Greek at all.

What in effect this means is that in the absence of criteria which allow one to affirm a certain inner affinity of outlook or sensibility relating the poets of a particular poetic tradition, one is forced to resort to what one might call exterior or accidental categories, and to give them a significance that is overriding. But one can do this only on condition that one fragments tradition as understood in the deeper sense of a sharing of common values and a common spiritual orientation, and substitutes for it the purely historical succession of well-defined epochs or cultural contexts that have no real organic link one with the other. This is the method that Trypanis has had to adopt. He has divided the whole three thousand year period into five parts: Ancient Greece, the Hellenistic Age, the Byzantine World, the Greeks under the Turks, and Modern Greece; and he has then subdivided each part into a number of sections. Each part has its own introduction, which sketches the bare historical background of the period it covers; and each section is then prefaced in its turn by a brief description of the main features, stylistic and other, of the particular form of poetry to which it is devoted.

Having established this overall framework, he considers the poetry itself within each section according to a strictly chronological sequence, dates and a few biographical details of each poet are first given, and this is followed by a list of the works he or she produced, with a brief discussion of the contents of these works should they be thought to deserve it. There is only one quotation longer than a single line in the whole book - it is taken from Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, and is perhaps accorded this honour because Trypanis regards it as embracing the finest lines in the entire corpus of Greek poetry, although he does not specify as much.

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in order to place within his or her historical and literary context practically every poet of any merit who is known to have written poetry in the Greek language. And should the reader wish to know more than this minimum, then he is provided with copious notes and a bibliography, both general and particular, of such comprehensiveness that one would think it would take the best part of several lifetimes to exhaust it.

In describing the book in this way, I do not want to suggest that it contains no critical appraisal and judgment. On the contrary, it is filled with comment that is acute, pertinent and often marked by a quiet and tempered wit, as, for instance, when we are told that Hippocanax "secured a long and influential career for the choral metre, if not for much else" or that Heraclitus "may easily be classed as the worst of the early Alexandrian poets".

It is an astonishing testimonial of love, scholarship, pride and discrimination. I tried to count the number of poets who receive individual treatment but gave up after I had reached the 800 mark. Yet it is clear that Trypanis knows about each of them as intimately as anybody now can and has read everything they all wrote. Of course, many of these poets are given no more than a few lines; but several are given a number of pages: Homer, for instance, gets thirty, Romanos the Melodist (whose works Trypanis has co-edited) three, and Solomon nine. Unobtrusive as they are, one can sense some of Trypanis's prejudices: he doesn't like anthropological material drawn from other cultures to be introduced into discussions about the origins of Greek drama; after quoting a line from the *Erotokritos* - "What the bodies have not accomplished, the souls will accomplish in Hades" - he asserts that there is nothing "mystical or metaphysical" about Aretousa's love; after a discussion on the place of the gods and the stars in the *Life of Homer*, he remarks that "Hesiod's *Theogony*, he remarks that "Barly Greek literature, as preserved, is entirely secular"; and when he speaks of "barbarous Eastern domination", admittedly with reference to the Turks, can one not nevertheless catch an echo of that assumption of cultural superiority by those for whom the classical ideal of Hellas and the significance of Marathon and Salamis still ultimately provide the measure of civilized values?

The particular version of the continuity of Greek culture which it is undoubtedly one of the purposes of this monumental work to acclaim, may beg questions or be coloured in ways that have been indicated in this review; but when, after a masterful survey of much of the greatest poetry ever produced in any language, the author concludes that poetry continues to be written in Greek which more than bears comparison with anything written during the last fourteen centuries, one can only express admiration and gratitude.

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## Stories from the Raj

### From Kipling to Independence

Selected and introduced by SAROS COWASJEE

Saros Cowasjee has rendered us a great service by disentangling these stories and bringing so many of these writers out of an undeserved obscurity. Amazingly, half of them are women. These are more than documents of a dead past and colourful stories of a half-forgotten time; they are part of the romance and terror of India, which was also an English adventure, made accessible and lighted by the imagination. From the preface by Paul Theroux 0 370 80456 X £7.50

## BODLEY HEAD

## commentary

### Earthly delights

By Simon Digby

The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Art under Mughal Rule  
India Observed: India as viewed by British Artists, 1760-1860  
Victoria and Albert Museum

The Festival of India has engendered an embarrassing number of exhibitions, mostly adequate in their content and cataloguing. The Victoria and Albert Museum is displaying two exhibitions which are outstanding for the quality of the contents, in which many items which cannot be equalled in our public collections have been borrowed. In the case of the first of these exhibitions, important items have come from India, the United States and Eastern Europe. The rather incoherent title *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Art under Mughal Rule* reflects a reality about the visual arts of South Asia which some find difficult to grasp. The great tradition of sacred art (Hindu/Buddhist/Jain sculpture) had achieved most of its masterpieces before the tenth century AD. Some of these masterpieces we may see in the current exhibition at the Hayward Gallery. On the other hand secular Indian art, which produced objects of great beauty but with little relation to the religious convictions of its patrons, flourished greatly under the Mughal emperors, Muslims of Central Asian origin, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

This tradition produced, apart from many beautiful paintings, some of the most sumptuous decorative objects in the world. Of this the visitor to this exhibition (on until August 22) may become aware on entering between dark-coloured carpets with fields inhabited by deer and beasts of prey and dragons and tame elephants with their riders. The orchestration of dark reds in the Mughal carpets and textiles, perceptibly different from Safavid and Ottoman examples of this period, is the dominant and unifying visual image of the exhibition. A few yards beyond the entrance the visitor sees in a dimly-lit niche a viceroy green carved emerald of 182 carats, beside imperial jade and wine-cups and archers' thumb-rings and a box and tray of heavy gold covered by sprays of scarlet flowers against a wide ground of champlevé enamel, this last from the treasures of the tsars at the Hermitage.

Yet if such displays of luxury are dazzling, Mughal India also produced objects of great beauty and sophistication out of humble materials: vessels of copper or brass, or of silver inlaid with silver; cabinets inlaid with ivory chips on teak veneer; and the resist-dyed, stencilled and painted cotton chintzes so greatly coveted in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe. Of the last, the hangings of Tipu Sultan's tent, taken in 1791 at the end of the eighteenth century, and preserved amid the Clive inheritance at Powys Castle, have been erected here. Many visitors appear delighted with the exhibition, even though the actual display falls off from an initial brilliance to a tatty end; but they are unlikely to realise the care which has gone to securing rare, or unique objects, which have survived from the Skelton and others, Victoria and Albert Museum, £4.95. 176pp. 0 905 209 206 is a landmark in the classification of Mughal art.

*India Observed: India as viewed by British Artists 1760-1860* (on until July 5) covers the period of the territorial rule of the East India Company, from Plassey, to the Mutiny, and is an important successor to the previous exhibition of India under Muslim rule. The pleasure of British painting in India is here gentle than the assault upon the senses of Mughal decorative art. This

is an exotic extension of a native British genre and can be readily appreciated by anyone familiar with British painting, thought and taste of the period.

This is the most comprehensive exhibition yet organized on this theme, with an admirable catalogue (by Mildred Archer and Ronald L. Sutherland, Victoria and Albert Museum in association with Trefoil Books, £3.95, 160pp. 0 905 209 184) which includes essays which explain the intellectual and literary background and the relation between the original paintings and markets of reproductions. It can be recommended to the student of the intellectual history of British involvement in India, as well as to those who are immediately drawn to these accomplished paintings and the prints which were made from them.



A European cameo portrait in agate of Shah Jehan, from the exhibition reviewed here.

### Table d'hôte

By Robin Buss

My Dinner with André  
Gate Cinema, Bloomsbury

The title *My Dinner with André* is an accurate description of the contents but, as Wallace Shawn has generously observed, may not give due credit to Louis Malle's direction in the creation of this remarkable film. As scriptwriter and actor, Wallace Shawn has every right to call this his dinner, but it could not have been served up, or at any rate made palatable, without Malle's sympathetic insight.

The idea came from Shawn's conversations with André Gregory, a director who in 1975 left the New York theatre to work in Poland with the experimental company of Jerzy Grotowski, and then travelled to Sri Lanka, Tibet, India and Scotland. In recording many hours of spontaneous conversation in an acting script, Shawn discovered in himself and Gregory the Sanchos Panza and Quixote they recreate under Malle's direction. In these fictionalized versions of themselves, Shawn regards Gregory with the acceptance of a man whose concerns in life include his girlfriend and his electric blanket. Gregory describes being buried alive, holding his hand in a candle flame, talking to vegetables and learning to search for enlightenment in a friend. His rewarded, but he carries on, convinced that the human spirit will survive only in isolated pockets like the Flindhorn community, which provides a refuge from brainwashing and the numbing effects of television.

The search for Truth has always been a privilege of the few, and it is Gregory who is at home in the plush restaurant, translating the meaning of the director's manipulations from the tiny caresses of the

### Ecological oratorio

By Paul Driver

Black Pentecost  
Royal Festival Hall

Peter Maxwell Davies's *Black Pentecost* is a curious work and has had a curious history. Its title originally applied to a piece sketched out in 1973 for the Philharmonia Orchestra. That proved to be a decisive essay, for its structure - two movements in one, a short slow movement accelerating into a scherzo - introduced the influence of Silbells on Davies's music and led directly to the breakthrough of the First Symphony (1976), of which it became the second movement, while similar experimentation in the combination of movement types has remained central to Davies's orchestral thinking, as shown by the finale of the Second Symphony (1980) and the present work.

The "Black Pentecost" title, lying free, was transferred with great appropriateness to a major commission from the London Symphony Orchestra, completed in 1979. The title comes from the last lines of a poem by George Mackay Brown which Davies set in a cycle for soprano and guitar, *Dark Angels*, in 1974, and refers to an unspecified disaster - uranium-mining, nuclear explosion? - threatening the traditional life of an Orkney island community. For the LSO Davies devised a continuous four-movement "song-symphony" using a text he quarried from the final part of Mackay Brown's novel, *Greenvee*, where the implications of the Black Pentecost symbol are spelt out very clearly indeed. The LSO would not touch it and the

ter sets in front of him. Gregory too does most of the talking. Like the fox in the proverb who knows many things, Gregory is eager, alert and slightly patronizing; only towards the end does the hedgehog strike back with the one great thing that he knows: Shawn is happy in New York. Common sense and enthusiasm meet, also each other up, and prove irreconcilable: "I know what you're talking about, but I don't really know what you're talking about", Shawn concludes.

An entertaining script and two virtuoso performances are not enough to explain the film's success in the United States. The appeal is partly that of a *tour de force*, but also derives from the fact that Gregory's quest has the charm of nostalgia in a society now obsessed with surviving through the economic recession. Like Shawn, most of us are and satisfaction that we know, and for those who never set out on the hippie trail, it is reassuring to be told that it was as likely to end in Sardinia as in Nirvana.

However, two hours is more than enough to make these simple points and the film would be unbearable if it were not for Malle's ability to maintain its pace and to suggest the superimposition of different levels of reality within the story. We are aware, after all, of watching two men playing themselves on a set and without a carefully-structured narrative. This contrived setting mirrors the artificiality of their situation. While Shawn and Gregory discourse on the above them, the waiter hovers, increasing nervousness at this sinister figure, perhaps betraying an intellectual unease in the presence of a working man. But at the same time, in a film which appears to demonstrate the supremacy of the spoken word, this silent shadow in the restaurant, which reminds us of the director's unobtrusive manipulation of what we hear and see,

work lay unperformed until the Philharmonia rallied to the support of what they indirectly stimulated, mounting its premiere in a "Music of Eight Decades" concert last week. Meantime, Davies had composed his Second Symphony, for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and uncovered simplifications of style and texture that would not have seemed surprising had *Black Pentecost* been heard in its chronological place.

The work is scored for a large orchestra (which generally sounds like a smaller one) and mezzo-soprano and baritone soloists. The conception is extremely novel; although there are obvious precedents in Mahler - and much of the idiom is indeed Mahlerian after Davies's typical fashion - *Black Pentecost* is a vocal drama, not a song-cycle; it would be more accurate to call it an "oratorio-symphony" with the precedent of works like Tippett's *Third Symphony* or A Child of Our Time relevantly invoked, though they too are only shadows in the background. Never before, perhaps, has a composer combined a symphony so symphonic and a drama so straightforwardly (propagandistically) enacted into one and the same work.

The first movement is purely orchestral: a very beautiful slow introduction to alto flute and strings, modulating into an urgent sonata-allegro that climaxes over accelerating timpani-strokes familiar from the Second Symphony. The baritone and mezzo enter in turn in the slow second movement and are given plenty of room to describe the mysterious "Black Star" operation that is contaminating the island of Heliya and filling it with "noise".

The mezzo adds an attractive wordless obbligato to the baritone's concluding words. The third movement is another allegro, scherzo-like, announced by a peculiar tapping of percussions and tinted by marimba ostinati: the mezzo tells of the dispossession of Bella Budge and her "diminishing republic of heat". In the finale the baritone puts the case for progress in egregious falsetto and to yelling horns glissandi, both taken from Davies's opera, *The Maryrdon of St Magnus* (1976); then the mezzo, over dead slow marimba beats reminiscent of the end of the chamber work, *Ave Maria Stella* (1975), commences a last lament for the defeated inhabitants.

*Black Pentecost* is certainly a key work in the Maxwell Davies canon: it is packed with gestures that are entirely his own, it displays his hard-won techniques at its most fluent and unproblematic, it links the two symphonies and is the biggest statement of an Orkadian theme developed in many pieces of the last decade. Yet it remains curiously unsatisfying partly because of the relative lack of interest of the characters depicted (also a fault of Mackay Brown's hanging on grimly to the comforts of those who never set out on the hippie trail, it is reassuring to be told that it was as likely to end in Sardinia as in Nirvana).

To complement the Festival of India Capital Radio, together with the National Association for Asian Youth, is sponsoring a Playwriting Competition. There will be two categories, one for a play written by anyone under the age of 18, with prizes of £300 and £200, the other for writers over 18, with prizes of £600 and £400. Plays should be in English, and longer than 45 minutes. Entries should be sent to Capital Radio Drama Dept, Duke of York Theatre, St Martin's Lane, London WC2, before July 31.

## commentary

### Two cultures, two story-tellers

By James Joll

Christ Stopped at Eboli  
Camden Plaza

The Southern Question - *La Question Meridionale* - has dominated Italian life for the last hundred years; and in each generation writers, political thinkers and artists - Salvemini, for example, and Gramsci and Carlo Levi - have reflected on the gap between the two Italys, the advanced, rationalist north and the backward, ignorant, poor and superstitious south. Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (now re-issued as *Stopped Penguin* at £2.50) was one of the most famous as well as one of the most poetic and penetrating first-hand accounts of the confrontation between two cultures and two economies. Levi, a member of the anti-Fascist resistance from the start, wrote it while in hiding in 1934-43, recalling the time eight years earlier when he had been banished as a political dissident to a remote and poverty-stricken area of Lucania, miles from the main-line station at Eboli. "Christ never came this far, nor did time, nor the individual soul, nor hope, nor the relation of cause to effect, nor reason nor history."

Some thirty-five years after Levi wrote his book, Francesco Rosi, himself a southerner, unlike Levi, made his film, a commentary on the 1970s on the 1930s as seen from the 1940s. In his next film after *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, *Three Brothers*, Rosi looked at the contemporary contrasts and tensions in the Italian south between the fathers who stayed on the land and the sons who went off to the north to seek their fortunes. In *Christ Stopped at Eboli* he is looking at a world still very little touched by outside influences, and a world in which, as the film brings out very skillfully, escape from the enclosed, hopeless society of the south could only come by emigration to America rather than, as now, to the north of Italy. The film makes us feel very directly the infinite remoteness, cultural, spiritual and geographical, of these dilapidated

Lucanian villages and their inhabitants.

Rosi recognized the difficulties of making a film of Levi's personal, episodic, reflective work in which visual impressions, political comment and ethnographical observations succeed each other, shaped only by the author's personality and the sequence of the seasons of the year. "In Levi's [book]", Rosi said in an interview before starting to shoot the film, "there is a character and I must contend with his reflections and his constant attention to the smallest visual detail, especially during the long passages of dialogue into which he has transformed Levi's own reflections, so that one is constantly aware of the contrast between the dark oppressive interiors, the decaying narrow streets and the vast sweep of the bare landscape outside. He reminds us too that Carlo Levi was at this stage primarily a painter: the film begins and ends with shots of his canvases, and there are constant reminders of this side of Levi's activity and the way in which his visual awareness helped him to survive the boredom and frustration of his exile. The result is a work of great visual beauty. Gagliano, its inhabitants and the surrounding landscape are seen by an artist, even if Rosi's vision, for all his faithfulness to Levi's text, is not always the same as that of Levi himself."

Gian Maria Volontè plays Levi with just the right combination of ironic observation and almost reluctant emotional involvement in the life of the village, as he finds himself called on to practise the medicine which he had abandoned in favour of painting; and he conveys the 'stages' by which Levi's courteous scepticism at the peasants' superstitions and credulity gives way both to respect for a system of beliefs totally different from his own, and to a mixture of sympathy and despair. This is very well brought out by the central scene of the film (which is also an example of the skill with which the ideas in the book are turned into convincing dialogue). In which Levi tries to explain to the Mayor - a typical example of the jumped-up petty bourgeois to whom Fascism gave an opportunity for power and

self-importance - the total alienation of the peasants from the Italian state and its rulers. His experiences at Gagliano had in fact turned Levi into an anarchist, even if later in life he returned to more orthodox political beliefs. "The state," he wrote, "can not solve the problem of the south, because the problem which we call by that name is none other than the problem of the state itself."

Rosi is clearly as fascinated by the peasant world as Levi was. His use of peasants to play the part of peasants (and his ability to make a well-known actress like Irene Pappas into a convincing peasant) is based on a deep observation of peasant ways and peasant reality (as, for instance, when the peasants are caught by a thunderstorm in the fields, and hasten to cover their most valuable possession, the mule, before covering their own shoulders), and a respect for their individuality. Indeed one of the themes of both the book and the film is the gap between the decayed middle-class, the policemen, doctors, schoolteachers, tax collectors, (the group whom Gramsci compared to Kipling's Bandar-log, the chattering monkeys in the *Jungle Book*), and the peasants whom they regard as being outside common humanity. Levi is poised between the two classes, the mayor and the pathetically decayed and dotty village priest, welcome him as a "gentleman", a "doctor"; the peasants see in the political exile a victim of the system like themselves.

While making the film, Rosi tells us, "it took me twice as long to narrate than my other films. And that naturally chased away the didactic aspect...". Perhaps it is almost too lyrically beautiful, the colours too pure, the children too pretty, the music by Piero Piccioni too lushly Mahlerian for this bleak landscape, and the dog Barone, though an excellent actor, would never have spent a night out with the wolves as Carlo Levi's dog in the book did. But it is a moving and haunting film, and its images, such as Don Carlo's first and last views of the countryside through the rain-spattered windows of the ancient village taxi, or the intensity with which the villagers experience an eclipse of the sun, remain in the mind.

Why then is it that *Skirmishes* is so impressive? It is, I think, because in Miss Hayes's work we have, perhaps for the first time, a play that treats the contemporary British theatre from a sentimentalism that in recent years has become excessive, boring. This sentimentalism lies simply in the easy assumption that all misery, all evil, are removable because they are caused by something undefined called "the system", which can be altered. Miss Hayes brushes aside this facile optimism, and faces without equivocation the fact that the tragedy in life lies in life's fundamental conditions: that men and women grow old and disgusting, that inevitably when everything noble about them - beauty, thought, ambition - has departed, what remains is the unendurable vice. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? A piece of stinking flesh, and worms and corruption.

*Skirmishes* is therefore a play of great courage; and courage, even, or perhaps especially, when it stands up, without hope, to utter disaster, is always an exhilaration and a joy. One leaves the Hampstead Theatre stronger and braver because of Miss Hayes's complete pessimism; her denial of the steadfastness of the nobility of human nature, and her repudiation of modern sentimentalism and evasion. The play is masterfully acted by all three actresses, none of whom hesitates before the terrible nature of her part; and it is directed by Tim Fywell without misgivings or avoidance of its implications.

### Shutting the gates of mercy

By Harold Hobson

Skirmishes  
Hampstead Theatre

Catherine Hayes's greatly praised *Skirmishes* is both pitiful and pitiless. When Cardinal Newman was accused of cruelty, he defended himself by saying that he could never personally have cut off the ears of a Puritan. Miss Hayes is made of sterner stuff. She shrinks from nothing. It is true that there is not anything in *Skirmishes* as sensational as the stoning to death of a baby in Edward Bond's *Saved*. But that now famous incident was only an episode in an entire evening; while Miss Hayes's subtle horrors are as continuous as they are relentless and ruthless. Without hesitation or flinching, she shuts the gates of mercy on mankind.

An old lady (Anna Wing) lies in bed, dying, defecating, speechless, paralysed, urinating. Her two daughters, Jean (Frances de la Tour) and Rita (Gwen Taylor), are at her bedside, quarrelling. Jean has been looking after her mother for months; and in a hard, ringing voice talks without euphemisms of the indignities and filthiness and sheer physical labour of looking after an old woman who is incontinent and whom she wishes would die more quickly than she shows any sign of doing. Rita is gentler and more considerate in speech. She is horrified at the harsh cruelty of the things said by her

sister, more sympathetic to the distress of her mother. But there is a further difference between them. Jean, after all, despite her disgust and hatred, remains with the old woman and performs her ignoble duties. The loving Rita, on the other hand, is happily married to a man she has taken from another woman; she has children whom she cannot neglect; she cannot possibly stay with her mother; and when her exhausted, sleepless, vituperative sister, in a very moving scene, begs her to remain to give her a few days rest, she replies that she must go home by the next train. She resumes her hated task; and without direct statement or any comment except the suggestion of an underlying pity, Miss Hayes preaches her terrible doctrine that self-sacrifice does not ennoble, but degrades, and that the kindest deeds are those most unkindly done.

This powerful and unforgiving play presents the same view of life as the plays of Jean Anouilh, of whose *Eurydice* (seen here as *Point of Departure*) the then most influential of Parisian critics, Jean-Jacques Gautier, wrote in condemnation. "To the question, 'Is it possible to live?', it would appear that, after due consideration, Anouilh replies: 'in the negative'; and, convinced of the inefficiency of love, sees no other solution than death." This thought runs through all Anouilh's work, and it is the reason that so many of his plays have been received in Paris and in other places with distress and abuse.

### New Oxford books: Literature & Theatre

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#### Selected Poems

John Montague

This is a selection made by the poet himself from his earlier collections (now out of print) including *The Rough Field*, *A Slow Dance*, *Poisoned Lands*, and *The Great Glean*, with some new poems as well. In 1979 John Montague was the winner of the Poetry Society's Alice Hunt Bartlett Award. £5.95

#### Oxford University Press



# commentary

## Les très riches oeuvres

By Robert Halsband

The Art of the French  
Illustrated Book, 1700-1914  
Pierpont Morgan Library

"The Art of the French Illustrated Book, 1700-1914," an exhibition of striking breadth and richness, opened on April 28 in the marble grandeur of the Pierpont Morgan Library.

About 100 books are on show, supplemented by engraved prints in various states and by drawings. Most of what is shown comes from the collection of Gordon Ray, who over the past thirty years has collected (inter alia) more than 2,000 French illustrated books, a collection unrivalled at least in the United States. About 400 of these will be enshrined in a sumptuous two-volume catalogue to be published in the autumn by the Library and Cornell University Press. What can now be seen in the glass cases of the Library, then, is the *crème de la crème* and air-conditioning should keep the show fresh and uncurdled until it closes in the humid midsummer of July 31.

The books in the exhibition support the generally accepted opinion of bibliophiles that French illustrated books, from the 18th century onwards, represent the summit of book-making; and that the illustrations themselves parallel the excellence of French art. Few artists of the first rank are missing from those who illustrated literary texts shown here. These include two outstanding works of the early rococo: the animal painter Oudry's plates for La Fontaine's fables; and Boucher's for Molière's plays. The 1762 illustrations by Elsen for La Fontaine's *Contes et nouvelles* glow with a delicate eroticism comparable to Fragonard's 1795 plates for the same work. A sentimental and more voluptuous style can be seen in Prud'hon's illustration for a poem by Bernard at the end of the century. Not until 1826 did the Delacroix style appear full-blown in Delacroix's illustrations for *Poésies*, done in lithograph, a medium that encouraged the artist to execute as well as to design his illustrations. Manet's plates for *Le Corbeau* (1875) in that medium, a masterpiece of impressionist vision, anticipate the *livre de peintre*, in that genre of illustrated book - also called *livre d'artiste* - the poet and the artist are equal partners. Few examples are so successful as Bonnard's version of Verlaine's *Parallèlement* (1900), exhibited here in full splendour. Like Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard could fuse lithographic illustration with printed page so as to make them indivisible. Then, with eighteen examples of illustrated books published between 1900 and the First World War, the exhibition concludes its promenade through more than two centuries of superlative book design and graphic art.

The time span of the show points up an irony in fine book-making and its consumers. During the mid-rococo period books were *objets de luxe*,

bought only by the aristocracy and the wealthy. In the year that the French Revolution erupted, the Royal printer issued a lavish volume entitled *Monument du costume*. But with the rise of the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century, a much wider public bought illustrated books and magazines as well - which have been called "democratized books" - and prints collected in albums. Daumier's and Gavarni's various series, for example, were enjoyed by the very classes and professions held up to ridicule, satire being a sort of mirror (as Swift wrote) "wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own." In the twentieth century the wheel has come full circle; with *livres de peintre* and *éditions de luxe*, the illustrated book has again become a costly artifact.

In his wide-ranging selection of nineteenth-century books for the ex-

hibition Professor Ray departs somewhat from the traditional concept of an "illustrated book". As defined by Frank Weitenkampf, the illustration must relate to both text and typography. If neither is present, can the plates be called book illustrations? Or are they not rather collections of lithographs published and sold as a *suite* and bound between hard covers thus gathered between hard covers they have been called "lithographic albums". One exception, perhaps, is Delacroix's sixteen plates of scenes from *Hamlet*, for the play illustrated is so well known that the viewer's memory provides the literary text. However brilliant the social, topographical, and political lithographs of some nineteenth-century artists, these are not illustrated books. But why quibble, when Professor Ray's generous definition has added to the exhibition such an abundance of *délices*?



An illustration by Charles Monnet to Voltaire's *Candide* (1770), from the exhibition reviewed here.

## Facing the music?

By David Profumo

Pennies from Heaven  
Various Cinemas

In making MGM's first original musical for twenty-six years, director Herbert Ross and writer Dennis Potter have put 19 million dollars to brave use, for they have produced an extravagant musical fable that anatomizes and transforms the whole tradition of Hollywood musical extravaganzas. The musical numbers are well-known classics, but the pioneering quality of this film lies in its juxtaposition of the lyrics with the actual conditions of life in the period of their greatest popular currency, the American Depression.

Potter has managed to translate his extraordinary six-part BBC series of 1978 into an authentic American idiom; but *Pennies from Heaven* is not so much a reworking of the television version as a new concept in the making of a film. Arthur (Steve Martin) is a struggling sheet-music salesman whose worldly ambition is to open his own shop; but music affords him more than his scant livelihood - it also provides him with a whole imaginative existence, for he believes in the euphoric world of the songs he peddles. In the pursuit of ecstasy away from his sexually recalcitrant wife (Jessica Harper) he seduces Elleen, a virginal teacher (Bernadette Peters), whom he abandons when pregnant, only to meet up with her again as a prostitute.

Paralleling Arthur's imaginative and sordidly real lives, the film oscillates between two distinct representations of action. The often slow horizontal progress of the story, frank in its nastiness, is energized by explosive vertical eruptions where characters enact elaborate dance routines to the music of celebrated 1930s songs. In all but one instance, the actors "lip-synch" the words of original recordings, with the effect of bizarre ventriloquism as the characters mentally recast themselves into the situations of their fantasies.

As with the drama of Brecht, there is an ironic aptness in the disparity between each song and the ostensible circumstances of the plot surrounding it; for example, when Arthur has his request for a loan refused at the bank there ensues a lavish Busby Berkeley-style staging of "Yes, Yes, My Baby Said Yes, Yes". The witty and mordant variety of these dozen or so sequences, beautifully choreographed by Danny Daniels, accounts for most of the film's value as entertainment and provides some virtuoso dancing from Steve Martin and Christopher Walken, whose performance as a lizardly bar-room pimp involves a magnificent combination of tap-dance and striptease.

There are two versions of the song "Pennies from Heaven", but significantly neither is that of Bing Crosby. The first rendition is Arthur Tracy's, a contrived recording which is mimed to perfection by the destitute Accordion

Man (Vernel Bagneris) in a compelling soft-shoe routine in which he is gently deluged by golden coins. Later, when the innocent Arthur is about to be hanged for the murder of a blind girl (the Accordion Man being in fact responsible) there is a reprise of the song - this time in Martin's own voice - on the scaffold of the penultimate scene (though as with *The Beggar's Opera*, the film closes on an artificially happy note in conspicuous deference to the audience's expectations.) The song's shining optimism is the epitome of Arthur's fantasizing.

By contrast to the brightly-lit musical numbers, Depression existence is represented as literally and metaphorically dark; whirling dance snaps back into near-static scenes of dialogue that intensify the claustrophobia. The film opens in Arthur's dreary bedroom with his joyless pre-breakfast attempt at passion with Joanne, and it is characteristic of the film's method of rehearsing its themes that, later, the blind girl's murder takes place in view of a hoarding advertising the buried features of Carole Lombard in *Love Before Breakfast*, quickly echoed by a shot of the corpse's blackened eye. Elsewhere, too, legendary pictures of the Depression are revitalized: several of Edward Hopper's atmospheric paintings are recreated, including "Nighthawks" and "New York Theatre".

After the latter, Arthur in a cinema watches Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers performing "Let's Face the Music and Dance" in the 1934 film *Follow the Fleet*, and, enraptured, he leads Elleen into an identical dance on the sill of their cinema-screen. The old black-and-white movie fills our screen; too, and for a moment the fugitive duo, in Metro colour, appear as in a *trompe-l'œil* to those escaped both the film they are mimicking and the film in which they feature, twirling out into our own auditorium, before being uncannily absorbed into a full-scale reconstruction of the original classic, to finish the routine by peering at us through ranks of canes and topers, imprisoned in the medium of their fantasy. It is at once a complex and marvelously provocative example of film-making, realizing a common experience of cinema-goers - that sense in which the seeing of something on film persuades the viewers they can, in part, manage the same thing themselves.

Steve Martin seems to miss some of the psychological modulations that his lead role offers. He is known in America as a clean-cut comedian, and this is an adventurous piece of casting for him, but despite his superb dancing he never conveys a plausible relation between his infantile idealism and the bastardly way in which he behaves towards women. As his unhappy wife, Jessica Harper masterfully underplays, and, wide-eyed as a rabbit in a snare in the face of his insistent sexuality, wins sympathy by dint of her quiet horror. But the triumph of characterization is found in Bernadette Peters's Elleen, which she interprets with a delicate insight, transforming the schoolmarm of latent sensuality into a toughened madame who never retreats to the stereotype of the noble whore, but remains vital and alluring in tarnish, the one oasis of survival in a desert of victims.

*Pennies from Heaven* is a disturbing and clever film, a musical fantasy that grimly shows how popular individual imagination, considering the chosen historical setting, what seems to be curiously lacking from this ragout of adultery, penury and prostitution is the sense of political commitment that Potter normally brings to his arresting morality plays. Occasional lapses in momentum, though, are compensated for by the several visual *chefs de force* that establish this as a film which exposes the ways that marketed fantasy invades the life of the mind and the imagination of life.

## Allusion in Poetry

Sir, - In his review (May 7) of John Hollander's *The Figure of Echo*, John Bayley cites, among other examples of allusion in poetry, the case of Keats changing "the viewless winds" of *Measure for Measure* into "the viewless wings of Poesy" in the "Ode to a Nightingale".

He argues that this change from winds to wings involves an impoverishment of sense - how can wings be invisible? he asks - and that Keats is misinterpreting "viewless" as meaning blind, the suggestion being that Poesy "does not know where she is going".

This particular idea does not "ring a bell" with me, but that may be a personal reaction. However, what Professor Bayley does not mention is a rather more important echo both of sound and sense, which in its turn leads to others. The words in question are from "The Progress of Poesy," a Pindaric Ode of Thomas Gray, himself the most echoing of poets:

No second he, that rode sublime  
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy  
The secrets of the abyss to spy  
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,  
Closed his eyes in endless night.

It is of course Milton who is referred to here. So although I doubt if Keats thought Poesy was blind, I believe that he certainly had in mind the blindness of Milton - "eyeless in Gaza" - and in particular the first fifty-five lines of the third book of *Paradise Lost*, in which the poet invokes the light that has been denied to him by his blindness, in spite of which he nightly takes flight through the darkness to the Muses and to Sion:

as the wakeful Bird  
Sings darkling, and in shadowed Covert hid  
Tunes her nocturnal Note.

In Milton's poem it is the nightingale that is darkling, in the "Ode to a Nightingale" it is Keats himself - "Darkling I listen" - who is preparing to fly to the nightingale on his "viewless wings".

So I agree that Keats was partly hearing "viewless" as meaning blind but I think this did not prevent him from also using it in the Shakespearean sense of "invisible". There is no great poetic difficulty about winging being invisible, especially when it is words - or thoughts - that are winged, from the *τρανσπορτα* of Homer to Shakespeare's Chorus in *Henry V*:

Thus with imagin'd wing our swift senses  
In motion of no less celerity  
Than that of thought.

"To return to the 'viewless wings' of Claudio's speech in Act III of *Measure for Measure*, the whole of that speech must have been in Keats's mind when he was composing his Ode, only he has turned its argument upside-down. Claudio says: The weakest and most loathed worldly life That age, ache, penury and imprisonment Can lay on nature, is a paradise To what we fear of death.

Keats on the other hand is "half in love with easeful death" and wants to: Fade far away, dissolve and quite forget

The weariness, the fever and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies

Claudio opts for life, Keats for death. Gray in "The Progress of Poesy" evokes the life that awaits mankind, but in Miltonic vein turns to poetry for strength to endure them: Man's feeble race what ills await, Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain, Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train, And Death, and refuge from the storm of fate's tumult, and the gloom of time's decay. The fold complaint, my song, disprove, And justify the laws of love. Say, has he given in vain the heavenly Muse?

ingale" odes are to an exceptional extent poems about poetry, allusive to a heightened degree, and that "with no middle flight intend to soar". Hence the special interest of the example chosen by John Bayley.

CHARLES MADGE,  
28 Lynmouth Road, London N2.

Sir, - John Bayley in his review of John Hollander's *The Figure of Echo* (May 7) quotes these lines from Hardy's "Afterwards":

And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings  
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom.

and he suggests that Hardy's poem "is not a culturally ghostly poem. . . . It puts us in touch not with the poetic past but with the poet himself. . . . In fact, Hardy is playfully echoing a very familiar phrase from the gospels (eg "and the third day he shall rise again", Mark 10, 34). And as at least one Hardy scholar has noticed, Hardy also alludes to Gray's Elegy in "Afterwards".

TOM PAULIN,  
Department of English, University  
Park, Nottingham.

## The American Purple Finch

Sir, - I view with some consternation the claim by D. C. Damant (Letters, April 30) that Muriel Singer's *The Children's Book of American Birds* can be used as confirmatory evidence that the American purple finch is in fact a linnet.

Does not this Damant come know that *The Children's Book of American Birds* was written not by Muriel Singer but by Saint Peterson, a wretched hack who would do anything for a hundred dollars? How, I ask you, can one trust the ornithological expertise of a man who - as Corky Corcoran pointed out in "writes a novelette, three short stories, and ten thousand words of a serial for one of the all-fiction magazines under different names every month"?

As far as I am concerned, Sir, the matter is still open.

JACK ADRIAN,  
Clematis Cottage, Cradley, near  
Malvern, Hereford and Worcester.

## 'The Tropical Traveller'

Sir, - The splendid lyric quoted by John Hatt in *The Tropical Traveller* and held suitable by your reviewer Dervla Murphy (April 30) for the entertainment of non-English-speaking tribesmen is even more splendid in a fuller version:

The sexual life of the camel  
Is older than anyone thinks;  
It can only be satisfied fully  
By going to bed with the Sphinx.

Now the Sphinx has an external office  
That is choked by the sands of the Nile;  
Hence the hump on the back of the camel  
And the Sphinx's inscrutable smile.

HARRY V. KEMP,  
Old Hall, High Bithwaite, near  
Ulverston, Cumbria.

## Melanie Klein

Sir, - I have to protest at the extraordinary distortion of Melanie Klein's view of the infant in Peter Lomas's review (May 7) of Victoria Hamilton's *Narcissus and Oedipus*. Lomas writes: "Melanie Klein . . . sees the child as greedy, insatiable, hostile, discontented, a stranger to love, pushed reluctantly into reality by means of anxiety and remorse for his cannibalistic impulses." I would like to contrast this with what Klein actually said and wrote many times. For instance, in *The Origins of Transference* (1952) she writes: "Autocriticism and narcissism include the love for and relation with the internalised good object which, in phantasy, forms the loved body

and self. It is to this internalised object that in auterotic gratification and narcissistic states a withdrawal takes place. Concurrently, from birth onwards, a relation to objects, primarily the mother (her breast), is present."

Is this seeing the infant as "a stranger to love"?

One of Klein's disagreements with Freud was that where he believed that "hatred is older than love", she was convinced that love, as well as hatred, was present from the beginning.

HANNA SEGAL,  
3 Lyndhurst Road, London NW3.

## 'Levitation'

Sir, - In spite of the "fantastic flashes" of critical appreciation, Adam Mars-Jones's review of Cynthia Ozick's *Levitation* (April 23) irks by its wanton use of paradox and urbane *fantasie verbale* concealing atavistic "thoughts" quite unacceptable for the level of discourse expected from the TLS. Witness: "Cynthia Ozick is a woman, Jewish and a New Yorker; these conditions in combination might be expected to produce a narrow art, if any at all." Luckily Cynthia Ozick does overcome her supposed handicaps of sex, ethnicity and habitat brilliantly. But must the implications always be: how odd! Should wit and literary style still charge so much?

SETH L. WOLITZ,  
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## The Ethics of Abortion

Sir, - I have read with much interest comments concerning the abortion issue in the TLS, particularly those by Peter Singer (October 30, 1981) and Vaughan Bowen (Letters, April 23) dealing with parasitism.

To assert that the young human, while, of necessity, living in the uterus of his mother and deriving full nourishment from her is a parasite, is scientifically untenable. In his book *General Parasitology* (1973) Thomas Chess points out that "parasitism is defined as an intimate and obligatory relationship between two hetero-specific organisms (two different species) during which the parasite, usually the smaller of the two partners, is metabolically dependent on the host." The young human, as an embryo or foetus, is of the same species as the mother and must experience this relationship in the early phase of life.

Vaughan Bowen attempted to imply that a probem human, existing in a homospecific relationship, might be considered as a parasite by citing a most unusual situation in which the adult male angler fish lives attached by its head to the female angler, deriving its full nourishment from her, and claims that this homospecific relationship is parasitic. But is it? A parasite is also an organism that harms its host to some degree, thus distinguishing this form of existence from other symbionts, such as mutualistic and commensal forms. Does the male angler harm the female angler, or is this unique relationship mutualistic, serving to aid both organisms and the survival of this species?

The argument that because all nourishment is derived from the mother by the unborn human it is therefore to be considered parasitic is to ignore the fact that for most of human history all nourishment was derived from the mother for some time after birth, the child existing only on mother's milk, gained by suckling. But no one attempts to call a newborn or older child a parasite.

All placental mammals begin their lives in a natural, dependent and intimate relationship with their mothers. The human is no exception. The intra-uterine phase of existence is a positive, healthful and essential part of the life of each individual

## 'Bernini in France'

THOMAS L. JOHNSON,  
Department of Biological Sciences,  
Mary Washington College,  
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401.

## Women's Suffrage

Sir, - Kyril FitzLyón says in his review of Juhani Paasilvirta's *Finland and Europe* (May 7) that Finland was "the first country in the world" to give women the vote, in 1906. In Europe, perhaps, though only a year ahead of Norway; but not in the world. New Zealand did so in 1893 and Australia in 1902, and the American state of Wyoming had done so back in 1869.

LEONARD NEWMAN,  
103 Commercial Street, London  
E1.

## Hugh Miller

Sir, - Perhaps Owen Dudley Edwards (April 2) is right in terming Hugh Miller's politics "roughly the same as those of that other voluble nineteenth-century educationist of Scottish antecedents, T. B. Macaulay". But Miller, for one, surely would have been horrified to hear of it. In his *Macaulay on Scotland: A Critique* (1857), Miller argued that Macaulay's partisan Whig account of the Highlanders, together with his personal representation of Scotland to the House of Commons, amounted to disloyalty to his Scottish heritage. For his part, in a rare printed acknowledgment of criticism directed toward the *History*, Macaulay characterized portions of Miller's book as "idle and dishonest objections".

RANDOLPH BUFANO,  
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## Among this week's contributors

J. J. G. ALEXANDER is Reader in the History of Art at the University of Manchester.

B. M. BOLTON is a lecturer in History at Westfield College, London.

ANTHONY BURGESS's most recent novel is *Earthly Powers*, 1980.

J. M. COCKING's *Proust: Collected essays on the writer and his art* will be published shortly.

CLAIRE CROSS's most recent book is *Church and People, 1450-1680*, 1976.

SMITH DIOBY is the author of *War Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate*, 1977.

PAUL DRYDEN is writing a book on Peter Maxwell Davies.

DENNIS DUNCANSON is President of the Royal Society of Asian Affairs.

HAMID ENAYAT is a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford and lecturer in Modern Middle Eastern History at the University of Oxford.

ROBERT HALSBAND's *The Rape of the Lock and its Illustrations 1714-1895* was published in 1980.

PETER HEBBLETHWAITE's most recent book is *The Papeal Year*, 1982.

CHRISTOPHER JANAWAY is a lecturer in Philosophy at Birkbeck College, London.

JAMES JOLL's books include *Granville*, 1977.

CHARLES MONTEITH is Senior Editorial Consultant at Faber and Faber and a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

A. W. PRICE is a lecturer in Philo-

## 'Bernini in France'

Sir, - On my return from abroad I found Cecil Gould's letter (April 19) in answer to my review (March 19) of his book *Bernini in France*. Let me apologize first to Mr Gould and to your readers: my typewriter - which should have known better - did indeed slip, and gave Paul Fréart his brother's title of Chambéry. But my other alleged lapses I can't take quite so seriously. Gould accuses me of having said that Henry II inaugurated the building of the Louvre, whereas this had been done by Francis I. He is right about Henry and Francis, but wrong about me, who wrote that Henry II had started building it. Inauguration would have been appropriate to Francis I, who commissioned the rebuilding plans, but then in his reign "on fit tomber plus de l'ancien chateau qu'on n'en éleva de nouveau". So it was Henry II who started the building proper.

I cannot take up more of your space with such a trivial consideration of Mr Gould's several points. Even if he had been entirely correct, his quibbles would do little to modify the substantial criticisms which I made.

JOSEPH RYKWERF,  
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Cambridge.

## Poetry Competitions

Sir, - William S. Milne (Letters, April 23) asks if the Arts Council of Great Britain has ever heard of Caledonia, and appears to imply that we have organized a poetry competition. Yes, we have heard of Caledonia, but, no, we are not running a poetry competition.

CHARLES OSBORNE,  
Arts Council of Great Britain,  
9 Long Acre, London WC2.

PHILIP SHEPARD's study of modern Greek poetry, *The Marble Threshing Floor*, has recently been reissued.

OLIVER TAPLIN's most recent book is *Greek Tragedy in Action*, 1979.

RALPH TREVELYAN's books include *Rome '44: The Battle for the Eternal City*, 1981.

BERNARD WASSERSTEIN is Director of the Tauber Institute at Brandeis University and author of *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*, 1971.

J. M. ZIMAN is Professor of Physics at the University of Bristol. His *Puzzles, Problems and Enigmas* was published in 1981.

## The New Hungarian Quarterly

A political and cultural review published in English in Budapest. Editor: Nán Bokros. No. 36, Spring 1982. Recent issues on how economic and political incentives in a socialist society. The agriculture of the revolution: a success story? Freud in Hungary. A legitimate edition of the first complete edition in Hungary. A historical symbol in the music of Richard Strauss and Béla Bartók. Poems, fiction, book reviews. Nations, regions, theories. Inquiries should be addressed to: Kultura Partido Export Department P.O.B. 148 H-1096 Budapest Hungary. At request we will be pleased to supply you with a sample copy.

Competition No. 71  
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than June 11. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, Times Literary Supplement, PO Box 7, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ. The solution and results will appear on June 18.

I Fancy what a game of chess would be if all the chessmen had passions and intellect, more or less small and

cunning; if you were not only uncertain about your adversary's men, but own; if your knight could shuffle sky; if your bishop, in disgust at casting, could wheedle your pawns out of their places; and if your pawns, hating you because they are appointed posts that you might get check-mate on a sudden.

2. Mr Featherstern was a little nettled on being told that he was to be the *king's rook*, but smoothed his wrinkled brow on being assured that no *mauvaise plaisanterie* was intended.

3. Long did he meditate. Then, his sombre decision taken, he summoned his two torchbearers, and

they led the pawn away into outer darkness, to the sound of cymbals and drums.

Competition No. 67  
Winner: Jane Elder

Answers:  
1. It was the fashion to dance in archery dress, throwing off the jacket, and the simplicity of her white cashmere with its border of pale green set off her form to the utmost. A thin line of gold round her neck, and the gold star on her breast were her only ornaments.  
George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, Chapter 11.

2. It was the figure of a very tall and fully developed young female, clad in

the grey overcoat of a French infantry soldier, continued nevertheless a short striped petticoat . . . her toes lost themselves in a huge pair of male slippers, which made her drag her feet as she walked.  
George du Maurier, *Tilbury*.

3. She dressed usually in Indian style, but - like his children when they were small - confusing the Eastern and Western varieties. She wore indiscriminately, Paisley-bedspread shifts; embroidered velvet slippers, fringed cowhide vests and moccasins, strings of temple bells, saris, shell beads, sandals and leather pants very loose in the ankle and tight in the

waist.  
Ailton Little, *The War Between the Tules*, Chapter 2.







## An April Epithalamion

For John and Anne Hughes

I meant to write a Poem Upon Your Wedding,  
Full of advice and hidden, deeper meaning.  
Alas, my life has locked me out of language.  
My sons skulk in their slum of drums and dinner;  
Distracting wars break out on distant islands;  
Rooms, uncured in sunlight, cry for cleaning.

I'll hum some thoughts in rhythm while I'm cleaning.  
Marriage, you know, is not a life-long wedding.  
A lurching of moony pairs to pearly islands  
Where love, like light, illuminates pure meaning.  
For just when truth's in sight, it's time for dinner.  
Or lust (thank God) corrupts pure love of language.

Love is, of course, its appetites and language.  
Nothing could be more human or more cleaning.  
It seems a shame to have to think of dinner  
And all the ephemeral trappings of a wedding  
When what you pay for seems to cost its meaning.  
Are sausage-rolls and cake somehow small islands,

Symbols, like champagne, of all the islands  
We try to join together through our language?  
John Donne was very sure about his meaning:  
No John or Anne's an island. For the cleaning  
Up and linking up of feelings, a wedding's  
A kind of causeway, then - like dinner.

O.K. A man (not John) could wed his dinner.  
God help him to imagine lusty islands  
Where sun and sea began life with a wedding.  
Begetting - not with greedy need of language -  
Greenness and creatures (winds to do the cleaning)  
That ring-a-rosy in a dance of meaning

Without which love might be the only meaning.  
I mean, of course, that love and war and dinner  
And politics and literature and cleaning  
Are only words, flat atlases of islands.  
While, with our minds, we caterwaul a language,  
Our eyes and bodies meet and make their wedding.

But look! I've spoiled your wedding with a meaning.  
Tried to spice up with language good plain dinner.  
Off to your island now! Leave me my cleaning.

Anne Stevenson

## Water

My aunt's bronchitis filtered through the clays  
of boggy meadows: the Brick Hole, the Long Moss.  
A watery nothingness  
In her it found  
its local habitation and its name.

I dredged green bottles from an oozy stream  
in Necarne woods. My brother heaved a spear  
of sharpened hazel.  
Stained light, blotched waterwords,  
a ruined braille my hands might utter.

Flooding even in summer. Oily heads  
in roadside fields where rats trawled for their lives.  
Lambags at a bus window, ringed with names,  
and killed bondsmen  
traculent in song.

The year McMahon sank his spring well  
at the hill's foggy foot, I took to heart  
The joys of Shakespeare, raked from the town dump.  
The boards smoked at the fire  
until they had dried.

The house was built in a bog, so the floor sank  
and the walls were damp;  
lines in a blue notebook, pages aired  
brown at the edges,  
stains like watermarks.

Pumphouse, conduit, culvert, patterns of drains  
like herding-fouls, channels, ditches, canals;  
but the next downpour sinking  
to meet the swell from underground,  
the water there from the start.

Frank Ormsby

## The Hebrew Class

Dark night of the year, the clinging ice  
a blue pavement-Dresden,  
smoking still, and in lands more deeply frozen,  
the savage thaw of tanks:

but in the Hebrew class it is warm as childhood.  
It is Cheder and Sunday School.  
It is the golden honey of approval,  
the slow, grainy tear saved for the bread

of a child newly broken  
on the bars of his Aleph-Bet,  
to show him that knowledge is sweet  
- and obedience, by the same token.

So we taste power and plesing,  
and the white wand of chalk slips on the board,  
milky as our first words.  
We try to shine for our leader.

How almost perfectly human  
this little circle of bright heads bowed before  
the declaration of grammatical law.  
Who could divide our nation

of study? Not even God!  
We are blank pages hungry for the pen.  
We are ploughed fields, soft and ripe for planting.  
What music rises and falls as we softly read.

Oh smiling children, oh dangerously gifted ones,  
take care that you learn to ask why,  
for the room you are in is also history.  
Consider your sweet compliance

In the light of that day when the book  
is torn from your hand  
and to answer correctly the teacher's command  
is to speak for this ice, this dark.

Carol Rumens

## Kite, Poisoned By Dingo Bait

Trephina Gorge, Northern Territory

By then the creek had died, and splashed  
Sand, fine as pepper, at our feet.  
Ghost gums, their leaves nervously green,  
Glistened like mercury in the heat.  
The gorge opened its wound of rock,  
Immaculate in the day's long glare.  
Goblets of stone lay where they fell  
In dreamtime through original air.  
Liquorice-coloured flies blundered  
Expertly, always out of reach.  
Wild passion-fruit, half-eaten by  
Cockles and ants rubbished the beach.  
Spinifex pigeons wedded, swam  
From a small shore as bright as bone;  
And unswayed in the waterhole:  
A cow, its ribs a xylophone.  
Wild donkeys, elegantly buffed,  
Arrowed a glance and danced away;  
Rumped on a naked river gum,  
A kite, as motionless as clay.  
Plumpling its feathers against death  
Like northern birds against the frost  
It gripped the noon, its eye of stone  
Blinded as by a pentecost.

Abandoning the sour pool, we  
Slopped through lagoons of desert grit  
Back to the truck - ex-Viet Nam,  
Still camouflaged - hoping to hit  
The beef road to Arltunga. Red  
Bulldust made smoke behind us, and  
Thinned for a moment, to reveal,  
Etched on a plate of scrub and sand,  
The cow, heaving comfortably  
Into the waterhole. The spray  
Donkeys skittered back. The kite  
Cleaned from the bough, and shadow-ly  
Another in the unversed sky.

Charles Causley

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### WALTER OAKESHOTT:

*The Two Winchester Bibles*  
162pp, with 12 colourplates and 192  
black-and-white illustrations. Clarendon  
Press: Oxford University Press  
£140.  
0 19 81 8235

Sir Walter Oakeshott has been interested in the Winchester Bible for some forty-seven years and his enjoyment and admiration in its presence are still fresh on every page of this beautifully written book. The Bible is a wonderful masterpiece of European Romanesque art. Its decoration was never finished, but there are so many fascinating problems concerning its text and its history, the identity of the artists and their collaboration, the changes of plan in the illumination, the dating of the various campaigns, and the changes in stylistic idiom, that it constantly challenges our understanding not only of art of the twelfth century, but of wider problems of artistic creation.

In 1945 Oakeshott published *Artists of the Winchester Bible*, a short study of the Bible illustrated with forty-four plates. As the title made plain his purpose was to identify the artistic personalities involved in the illumination and it was there that he coined the graphic names which have now passed into the literature of medieval art. There were, he thought, six main personalities, the Master of the Leaping Figures, the Master of the Apocrypha Drawings, the Master of the Amalekite, the Master of the Morgan Leaf, the Master of the Genesis Initial and the Master of the Gothic Majesty. In 1945 Oakeshott was able to show that certain illuminations were painted over drawings in a different style. The drawings had been executed by the Leaping Figures and the Apocrypha Masters, the paintings by the Genesis and the Morgan Masters, never the other way round, and this proved that the last two were working after the first two, which the style would have suggested in any case. Problems of chronology, as well as the identity and origins of the masters are the main focus of *The Two Winchester Bibles*. Considerations of the subject-matter and iconographic sources are relatively brief, though here too some new identifications and comparisons are proposed. For example, the gryphon in a roundel in the stem of the opening initial is suggested to be the guardian of the treasure inside the volume, just as in the Bestiary it is said to guard the pot of gold; a nice touch on the part of the publishers is to reproduce this roundel on the binding.

Since 1945 a number of new discoveries have been crucial to the further study of the Bible. One was Otto Pächt's recognition (in 1961) of the English, specifically Winchester, style of the wall-paintings in the Chapter House at Signa in northern Spain. These paintings had been photographed in 1936 just before their partial destruction in the Civil War, and their charred remains are today installed in the Barcelona museum. Another revelation was Neil Ker's observation, in his *Lyell lectures* of 1952-3, that a second Bible, the so-called Auct. Bible in the Bodleian Library, had been used to correct the text of the Winchester Bible and a start had been made in standardizing the two texts. The third, due to Oakeshott's own initiative, was the uncovering in 1965 by Eve Barker of the scenes of the Deposition and Entombment, painted in the late twelfth century. These had been hidden beneath the early thirteenth-century paintings of the same subjects in the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre in Winchester Cathedral.

Continuing to work on the problems of the Winchester Bible, Oakeshott published a study of the Signa paintings in 1972. This focused on the question of the participation in them of Winchester artists, in particular the Morgan and Gothic Majesty Masters, and also on the attribution to the Morgan Master of the paintings in the chapel. Naturally the book also dealt with various problems in the Bible and in particular with the so-called Morgan leaf. This single leaf, thought too expensive by William Morris when it was offered to him at £100, was bought by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1912. It contains the last part of the chapter lists of 1 Kings and is painted on both sides with scenes from the life of David. Eric Millar, who published it in 1926, had realized its stylistic connexion with the Winchester Bible. Oakeshott now showed that there must have been change of plan during the writing of the second volume in order to incorporate full-page frontispieces in certain books of the Bible as well as the historiated initials originally intended by the scribes. These frontispieces were executed in the form of drawings to "Judith" and "Maccabees" by the Apocrypha Master who also did the underdrawing of the Morgan leaf, eventually overpainted by a different artist named from this work. The list of chapters corresponds to that still in the book and the intention must have been to erase the latter when the leaf was inserted in the manuscript. Thus there was no longer a need to entertain Millar's hypothesis of a second lost Winchester Bible, even more magnificent than the surviving one. Oakeshott also observed the presence of two rubricators in the Bible, of whom the later, now known as the "Uncial Forms Master", may have provided the *tituli* at Signa. This rubricator's work is connected with the textual revisions which include two substitute leaves in Isaiah in Volume I of the Bible, that, according to Ker, were written not earlier than 1170.

*The Two Winchester Bibles*, as its title shows, reflects Oakeshott's increasing involvement with the implications of Ker's discovery, for the second Winchester Bible is the two-volume Auct. Bible. Oakeshott argues, however, that this was made not at Winchester but at St Albans, first, because of the style of its initials by the "Entangled Figures Master" in Volume I, and secondly, because of its many unusual textual variants. Confirmation comes not only from the considerable interest in good texts at St Albans at this time, particularly under Abbot Simon (1167-83), but also from a fragmentary Bible in New York, Morgan 823, which was brought to Oakeshott's attention by John Plummer. This is both textually related and also has initials which, as Larry Ayres pointed out in 1974, are by another artist who appears in Volume I of the Auct. Bible, named here by Oakeshott the "Brilliant Pupil". In the margin of Acts are written some extremely rare "Bezan" text, that is pre-Jerome, readings and these are entered in the main text of a later twelfth-century Bible, given to Abbot Simon and probably made for Abbot Sigismund, certainly from St Albans (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Ms. 49).

## The Masters of the scriptoria

By J. J. G. Alexander

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This convincing interpretation has chronological implications. The completed Auct. Bible must have been

written after 1180 and before c.1185. According to Ker the textual revision in the two Bibles was carried out by a scribe working after 1170. The uncial forms rubrication associated with this revision is closely connected with the illuminated initials by the later masters in the Winchester Bible. Oakeshott considers it possible that the rubricator was the Morgan Master himself, a point which should make us think whether certain aesthetic qualities of Romanesque art are related to monastic or professional artists training in calligraphic design. The chronological implications are, therefore, that the brackets for dating should close up from Oakeshott's earlier c.1150-1220 to the present suggested c.1160-1185; the writing and the first campaign-taking place in the 1160s and being interrupted perhaps as Oakeshott suggests by the death of Bishop Henry of Blois in 1171; the correction and the second campaign from c.1175 to 1185. The redating, as Oakeshott admits, lessens the appropriateness of the name "Gothic Majesty Master". His work which Oakeshott recognizes in a glossed Gospels at Trinity College, Cambridge, made for Abbot Simon of St Albans before 1183, would now be considered as belonging to a classifying trend that forms a transitional period between Romanesque and Gothic.

As against these dates Ayres has argued for an uninterrupted campaign over a shorter period; one of his main arguments being the continuation of the text of Malachi on folio 213 verso, column 2, and on folio 214 by the scribe of the Isaiah text, as observed by Ker. This point is not taken up by

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The difficulty is that books can be decorated in centres other than those that they were written in, and they can also be made in one centre as gifts for another. There is plenty of evidence in the twelfth century, as C. R. Dodwell and others have shown, for both professional lay scribes and artists who needed to travel for their livelihood, as monks were supposed not to. Moreover, we know so little about an artist's training, whether monastic or lay. The concept of a rigidly defined scriptorium with a consistent style is increasingly difficult to reconcile with this diversity of origins of manuscripts in a similar style and with the range of inter-connexions between books which seem to have been owned by different monastic houses. At any one time there are, as it were, three coefficients working, the model or models used for the text and for the illustrations (not necessarily the same model for both, of course), the script, and the style of illumination both figural and decorative and of different ranges of complexity. Oakeshott to some extent discounts the possibility of making further progress by study of script, but it still seems to me that the script should be considered the basic clue to locality. It is at this stage of the writing that the fundamental decisions have to be taken as to illustration and decoration, decisions which may of course later be modified or even ignored. The minor decoration, particularly the arabesque initials, often executed by the scribes or rubricators, is also a very important indicator of origin. So far no comparisons of the rather unusual arabesque initials in the Terence with either Winchester or St Albans books have been made. Oakeshott himself uses the evidence of these minor initials with important consequences in comparing the Winchester Casiodorus with the Auct. Bible.

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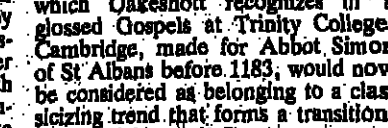
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## Sermons in garbage

By S. J. Newman

IAIN CRICHTON SMITH:  
A Field Full of Folk  
144pp. Gollancz. £6.95.  
0 575 03110 7

In *Murdo* Iain Crichton Smith broke gaol to create an anarchic philosopher-joker like a supercharged Henry Root. *A Field Full of Folk* shows him back in custody. A portrait of a Scottish village - what could be more unexceptionable? Mundane life calmly dissected into economy-sized fillets of narrative. Some eccentricity, a sports-day, death of a village - "In short", burlesque the blurb, "a village much like any other, with its prejudices and certainties and kindness and heartbreak". Yes, but Crichton Smith is a poet as well as a novelist - in fact he's the Scottish Philip Larkin - and like Larkin he's keenly aware of the poetic mania beneath the skin ("What is an artistic nature then? - One that cares nothing for other people?" as Larkin wrote in *A Girl in Winter*).

So one looks again. And closely, because the novel is dominated by a vicar dying of genteel scepticism and cancer, and Crichton Smith is addicted to the plaintive *vox humana* adrop that signifies decent concern and restraint. "If only I could feel", he thought, "if only I could feel". But the poetry is there. It discharges itself through images that make you blink ("a small plump snail with tiny black aerials", "cornstalks with big strappy bums"), the rumours of war and old unhappy far-off things lurking beyond the confines of the story, and the neatly incised characters: a mild widow unnervingly called Mrs Berry, and a barmy one who has abandoned Christianity for Buddhism but charitably imagines her railwayman husband holding up a red flag on a platform in some insignificant corner of hell; a xenophobic retired shepherd (xenophobia is a characteristic feature of the book: even the token Englishman is called Scott); a puritanical postman with apocalyptic tendencies; Morag Bharg with her son

on active service in Ulster; and Chrissie Murray who throws her bonnet over the windmill for a work-shy Glaswegian dreamer and optimist, but learns her lesson and returns to her staid joiner-husband.

These disparate people are yoked together by violence at the annual sports. It doesn't spoil the story to reveal that news of the death of Morag Bharg's son arrives while the people are belting out revivalist hymns - partly because he was never anything more than a trick devised by the author, partly because the climax is a damp squib. It is odd that a writer ostensibly so concerned with last things should lack a sense of endings. Perhaps Crichton Smith's inability to create a scene is the price he pays for his deadly delicacy.

Or perhaps the feline expertise disguises an uncertainty of motive. The vicar feels troubled by "some volcanic evil". Is this rage against his kind or the rage of his kind? Crichton Smith hesitates between both alternatives and neutralises each. As a result the characters tend to be suppressed by the style, rather than defined by it. Even an old flea-bag called Smelly who spends his life fishing dead food out of rat-infested dustbins, and would have caused the Black Death in Chaucer's time or cholera in Dickens's (much to the advantage of story and symbol), can only provide the Reverend Murchison with the opportunity to find sermons in garbage. Compare another poet vicar's treatment of village life: "See the stout churl, in drunken fury great, / Strike the bare bosom of his teeming mate!"

Crichton Smith can't command that mixture of controlled fury and sheer medieval gusto. Nevertheless he manages to smuggle a fair proportion of misogyny through the elegant porticos of his style *Indirecte libre*. It's fair to add, though, that far and away the most successful character in the novel is the barmy widow. She clearly has the Apocalyptic she it is heading for. She thinks we're kidding her. The medievalism lurking behind the novel's title - Langland is still alive, but he's moved to Scotland and wears a pin-stripe suit.

## In the Dickens mould

By Peter Lewis

LEON GARFIELD:  
The House of Cards  
296pp. Bodley Head. £7.50.  
0 370 30380 6

During the last two decades Leon Garfield has justifiably acquired a reputation as one of the best contemporary writers of children's literature, especially historical fiction. A few years ago he undertook the exciting but daunting challenge of completing *Edwin Drood*. Because most lovers of Dickens have their own idea of how he would have completed the novel had he lived, Garfield could hardly have expected to avoid a certain amount of carping and quibbling over his projected solution. Nevertheless, he has clearly soaked himself so thoroughly in Dickens that he was able to capture the tone and atmosphere of *Edwin Drood* with considerable success.

It seems likely that Garfield's late twentieth-century collaboration with Dickens led him to write his first novel for adults, *The House of Cards*. Apart from the eerie, haunting and brilliantly evocative first chapter, describing the aftermath of an antisemitic pogrom in Poland in the late 1840s, the novel is set in mid-Victorian England, mainly London, in many respects it reads like a mild Victorian novel. The convoluted plot, with its various mysteries and concealed identities, owes something to Wilkie Collins as well as to Dickens: there is a murder, an execution, a long-lost inheritance, a child of uncertain origin with the Shakespearean name of Perditia; there are intriguing, jaw-dropping revelations and a deliciously suspenseful melodrama, topped by a magnificent all-human

life, in fact. The narrative technique, stylistic mannerisms, speech patterns, and panoramic range of characters, from rural aristocrats and prosperous Jewish businessmen to a condemned convict and a scarier foreign woman, are all strikingly reminiscent of Dickens. Indeed, distant and not-so-distant echoes of Dickens's novels abound; Mr. Clark, with his dropped alitches, is an immediately recognizable Dickensian figure; Groom, the police inspector with his relentless investigative logic, is a relation of Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House*.

Garfield has not, therefore, written a historical novel of the usual kind; nor has he attempted the post-modernist version of the genre, in which the past is viewed from a present-day perspective, as in, say, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Instead he has produced a pastiche novel without any parodic intent, but "pastiche" must not be interpreted pejoratively. Garfield has re-created a Victorian novel without any supercilious condescension, and has provided devotees of nineteenth-century fiction, especially of Dickens, with a very good read.

To outline the highly intricate plot of *The House of Cards* is impossible in a short review, and in any case would be comparable to revealing the done it in a review of a whodunit. *The House of Cards* has no pretensions to profundity. It is an entertainment, plotted with great skill and ingenuity, peopled by vivid, boldly drawn and memorable characters, and narrated by a master storyteller with verve, wit, and a delight in the well-turned phrase and the expressive possibilities of language.

The price of Patrick McCarthy's *Cammy*, reviewed in the T.L.S. on May 7, was incorrectly given as £15. The correct price is £12.50.

## The contrivances of desire

By David Montrose

M. E. AUSTEN:  
Love-Act  
192pp. Cape. £6.50.  
0 224 02014 5

M. E. Austen's first novel would invite comparison with *The Magus* even if the blurb did not contain a give-away elucidation of its events as "perhaps some bizarre kind of God-game" (*The Godgame* was Fowles's alternative title). Like *The Magus*, *Love-Act* features a narrator - a young London prostitute instead of an English teacher - whose existence is enlivened and given shape by her participating in (and being trapped by) a series of tantalizing "games" controlled by a wealthy man of mystery.

Shirley - no surname - answers a euphemistic advertisement in a porn-magazine: "MODEL REQUIRED for special assignments. Acting ability and discretion essential. Apply, with photograph, Box 14." In reply, she receives a £100 cheque, a first class return to Brighton, a Penguin novel, and a three-page script. The covering letter, signed "P. Fox", instructs her to be in a certain seat on a particular train, reading the paper; she is to enact the script - a conventional pick-up - with "a man of about sixty years, dressed in a pale grey suit", presumably Fox himself. Shirley assumes this to be the kinky prelude to a routine bedding. In fact, once their dialogue has been performed, Fox disappears. Shirley feels let down:

## Falling for superior ways

Bu Savkar Altin

BARBARA TRAPIDO:  
Brother of the More Famous Jack  
218pp. Gollancz. £6.95.  
0 575 03112 3

Barbara Trapido's first novel is a sort of bohemian *Brideshead Revisited*, chronicling the transformation of a young woman which results from her involvement with an eccentric family. At the age of nineteen, the impeccably prim and middle-class Katherine Browne is taken up by the part-artistocratic, part-East End Jewish Goldmans, and immediately falls for their superior ways - such as allowing their younger children to make love with their parents, talking about each other's genitals at table, and scribbling messages on the kitchen wall: "Jake must love me" and "If Kris fones me again tell him to phuck off". These people are in fact no more likeable than their counterparts in *Brideshead*, but they are held up for our admiration in the same way, and in this instance there isn't even any of the pathos which surrounds Waugh's version when we see through poor unloved Ryder's ploy and realize that he praises his awful friends so much because he is unable to prove that there are people of real taste and discernment who want him.

The Goldmans, though, do render Katherine one service: she falls in love with their eldest son, an insecure and snobbish youth, named Roger, and when he dumps her because she wears earrings and has a semi-educated mother, she turns language teacher and goes off to Italy. She spends ten years in Rome, the last six of them with a middle-aged Italian fascist given to mistress-battering, who is, at least from the reader's point of view, a great improvement over the folks at home. Italy, too, is caught rather well, with its perpetual election posters, aerosol slogans, and black-and-white women selling black-market cigarettes.

Katherine gets pregnant, is abandoned by her blackbird boyfriend, and much surgical assistance and then loses the baby when it is only five weeks old. All this causes her to

... I made a vain attempt to convince myself that what I felt was not disappointment or depression but just a silly sense of anti-climax ... Another feeling grew ... I was a tiny bit hurt. He had not found me attractive, he had not desired me at all. The picture I'd sent him had lied ...

A fortnight later: another script arrives with a larger cheque. Shirley had passed the audition.

Even larger cheques follow, with scripts of greater length and complexity, charting the progress of an affair - still unconsummated - between "Juliet Kent", Shirley's persona, and Fox. Shirley is quickly captivated - perhaps improbably quickly - by the pretence: "good reviews" - Fox's approval of her acting - "replace money in order of importance". Shirley increasingly identifies with Juliet: like the character, she begins to fall in love with Fox. Fiction is usurping reality. One enactment turns out disastrously when Shirley forgets her lines. Afterwards, Fox is silent for ten days. Is the arrangement over? Shirley faces the prospect like a junkie about to go cold turkey. With forgiveness, and another script, "life had a meaning again". With deeper involvement, though, comes a sense of manipulation as the script-writer he held all the cards. When it becomes apparent that the plot is unlikely to develop to Juliet's advantage, Shirley perceives the dangers of her role-identification and determines to destroy Juliet, and revenge herself on Fox.

Fox's scripts are eventually unmasked as a reenactment of his affair with the real Juliet. With one differ-

ence: this time, the affair will be consummated. Fox harbours no Gatsbyesque obsession about regaining the past. Quite the opposite: "There has to be an end to desire: it must be either killed or satisfied." A surrogate Juliet is designed to satisfy his desire. Ironically, Shirley's attempt to destroy Juliet, and to hurt Fox - acting as herself, like a whore, during their love-making - does just as well, killing desire instead of satisfying it. An indeterminate conclusion is capped by a neat Fowlesian touch: Shirley's narrative is revealed as a fiction within a fiction.

*Love-Act* is altogether more modest than *The Magus*, far shorter and less complicated. Wisely, there is no effort to reproduce, in Fox's little dramas, the depth and persuasiveness of Conchita's Godgames. But comparisons do not always work to *Love-Act*'s disadvantage. Forewarned by the reference to "God-game", the reader anticipates twists that never come: a kind of reverse mystification. When Fox, in his first letter, does not acknowledge that he is the grey-suited man, it arouses suspicions that the man is another hired performer, and that Fox is secretly observing; when Shirley returns from the initial meeting to find her flat burgled, all sorts of speculations occur unnecessarily. Intentional or not, these uncertainties are effective. Austen shares none of Fowles's metaphysical preoccupations: he is primarily concerned to tell an interesting story and on this level he has succeeded. He writes and plots proficiently; his two characters are, despite the unlikely circumstances, rarely less than convincing. *Love-Act* represents a commendable debut.

return to England, where she is briefly treated by a psychiatrist who sensibly tells her that all her relationships have been constructed in defiance of her upbringing. Either to prove the truth of this statement, or because she now has splendidly patched-up genitals worth talking about, she contacts the Goldmans, who are promptly wheeled back on the stage - suitably made up to show the passage of the years.

Alas, for all the powder on their hair and the wrinkles painted on their faces, they are the same old Goldmans, still the only people in the world capable of referring to William Butler Yeats as "brother of the more famous Jack". They have developed weak hearts, religion and other complaints, but all in all they are in good form, as is evinced by their taking bottles of Guinness with them in plastic bags when they go into hospital and speaking of transubstantiation as "the real McCoy", the heroine, who is no longer at the age when other people's families automatically seem more interesting than one's own, and who therefore has no excuse, comes under their spell all over again, this time choosing as the special object of her affections the now married Roger's brother Jonathan, known to his close friends as "Jont". The two of them slum it for a while in a "dubious attic" in Kilburn, he writing a novel full of "nice smut", she working for a publisher, until finally they get married and leave for Ireland and domestic bliss in a country cottage. Barbara Trapido's is a curious sandwich of a novel, with some meat in the Italian section and some rather flat-tasting bread at either end.

## Lifting the turf

By Roger Mortimer

ROGER LONGRIGG:  
Bad Bet  
374pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.  
0 241 10760 1

Roger Longrigg has written some admirable books on the history of horse-racing. He has also produced about a dozen light-hearted novels which have apparently led certain reviewers to compare him with Evelyn Waugh. Y. G. Wodehouse and Doris Lessing. He has now combined his talents in *Bad Bet*, which is concerned chiefly with the Turf but has some lively sexual episodes thrown in for good measure.

The most successful authors in this particular genre (racing, not sex) have been the late Nat Gould, and Dick Francis. Gould was one of the best known writers of his day, but his readers tended to come from a less educated class than Francis's. Longrigg, wittier than either, certainly knows his stuff when he writes about racing; that is a strong point in his favour. All the same, for all his background expertise, Longrigg is about 10 lbs below Gould and Francis in the hand-pick.

There is plenty to deplore about

modern flat-racing, which is almost entirely concerned with money and can hardly be classified any longer as a sport. Under those circumstances it is scarcely surprising that many of the individuals now parading in the upper echelons of racing are singularly unattractive, but whether they are quite as unlikeable as the characters depicted in *Bad Bet* is another question.

Top-class racing today is largely international. Longrigg starts the reader off at Newmarket, where an elderly trainer, in a fit of alcoholic pique, exposes himself in front of a young girl. He then switches to Norfolk, and from there to Kentucky and Virginia. Some of the characters to whom the reader is introduced, for example the Old Harrovian Arab, Prince, are faintly recognizable as others are almost too gruesome to be such as the blonde secretary, a lesbian voyeuse who bores holes in bedroom walls to spy on young girls. The leading male is Matthew Carver, a not very interesting middle-aged American married to an exceptionally tiresome Englishwoman, who happily for one and all, dies before the end of the book.

Longrigg does not make it easy to follow the plot. At his best he is a talented writer with a sharp and agreeable wit. On this occasion he runs unaccountably below form.

## Betraying the swamp

By Louis Allen

SHUSAKU ENDO:  
The Samurai  
Translated by Van C. Gessel  
272pp. Peter Owen. £8.95.  
0 7206 0559 8

In *The Samurai* Shusaku Endo is back on familiar ground: the Christian century in Japan and the anguish of the European missionary priest trying desperately, at the cost of his life and almost of his faith - to make headway against what Endo characterizes as the swamp of Japan which absorbs and denatures all beliefs other than its own.

The story is based on firmly attested reality. When the Shogun had already decided to ban Christianity, Date Masamune, a daimyo from north-eastern Japan, allowed missionaries into his domain and sent out to Nueva España (Mexico) a ship built and sailed by Spanish sailors with a Japanese crew, so that Japan could trade directly with Mexico - hence with Europe - instead of using the Spanish merchants in the Philippines as intermediaries. A priest named Luis Sotelo and a samurai, Hasekura Rokuemon, were the chief figures of Date's mission, and Endo transposes these into a Franciscan priest, Velasco, and a poor inarticulate samurai who keeps the name Hasekura. Velasco has been banished from central Japan; he consents to accompany the mission because he sees in it the chance to put the Japanese in his debt, and also because success will obtain for him the bishopric he desires - not for ambition, but so that he can have the prime place in the spiritual conquest of Japan. Four samurai are picked to escort him and report back to Japan on conditions in Mexico; and several merchants go along to trade.

Velasco must convince the Mexican authorities that Japan is propitious territory for conversion, as rumours have already spread that persecution is on the increase. He achieves credibility by contriving the baptism of the merchants, though he is well aware of their venality. This does not matter: "God will not abandon them once they have received baptism. The Lord will never forsake someone who has uttered His name even once."

The greater test and the greater triumph, however, lie in Spain itself, where the samurai envoy encounters the Archbishop of Seville and, for the sake of their mission - they loathe the very idea of Christianity - agree to be baptized in their turn. One of them, Nishi, is very much taken by Spanish speech and man-

ners, and is eager (sometimes too eager, the others think) to learn the language and techniques of the West; but even he is not a convinced Christian, and Hasekura certainly is not.

To become a Christian was to betray the marshland. The marshland was not made up merely of those who lived there now. The ancestors and relatives of all the living silently kept watch over the marshland. Those dead souls would not permit him to become a Christian.

The iconography of Christ confirms this rejection. How can anyone give allegiance to that ugly emaciated figure, and the palpably absurd story which accompanies it?

Velasco's mission is imperilled by an old Jesuit with thirty years' experience of Japan, who debates with him before the Council of Bishops of Madrid. The debate is between two rival orders as well as two individuals, but the old Father Valente does not merely indicate the vernal nature of the merchants' conversion, he puts the case for Japan's imperviousness to Christian doctrine as Endo knows it has been put scores of times (as he put it himself in *Silence*):

Within the realm of Nature their sensibilities are remarkably delicate and subtle, but those sensibilities are unable to grasp anything on a higher plane. That is why the Japanese cannot conceive of our God, who dwells on a separate plane from man.

And yet, to convince the bishops, the samurai agree to accept baptism and Velasco is on the verge of triumph until Father Valente produces a letter from a Jesuit in Macao, reporting not only that the Protestant English have been allowed to set up a factory in south-west Japan, but also that the same daimyo who had sent Velasco and the samurai on their mission has begun to persecute Christians.

It is the end of the embassy. They press on to Rome itself, to the presence of the Pope in St Peter's Square, where the group of Japanese attempt to approach his palanquin but can say nothing when they do; Velasco, the only one who can understand the pleas of the Japanese to have their embassy noticed, is silent, as if to revenge himself on the uncomprehending Roman crowds.

The envoys retrace their steps. The Spanish dignitary who has come to the Philippines and who has been commanded, and the Japanese return to their "marshland", dazed to be once again imprisoned in grinding poverty and the restrictions of Japanese society after the splendours of the world outside. One of their group, Matsuki, who has been most hostile to Velasco and Christianity,

explains contemptuously to Hasekura that the main purpose of the mission was not mercantile, but an elaborate contrivance by Hasekura's feudal lord to obtain knowledge of Spanish ship design. The captive Spanish sailors turned shipwrights built their ocean-going craft from scratch under the watchful eyes of the Japanese. Once the desired information was gained, the lord had no further use for the expedition.

Haunted by the futility of their efforts and sufferings, Hasekura is harried still further: his feudal lord now needs to make it clear to the Shogun in Edo that nothing remains in his fief of the Christianity proscribed elsewhere. Hasekura is asked about the nature of his conversion; at first his lord is satisfied that it was purely tactical, but, commanded to present himself at court, he must offer some concrete evidence of ex-tirpation. Hasekura and Nishi are ordered to commit suicide in traditional samurai fashion, absurd victims of *raison d'état*.

Velasco's death follows. Unable to resist the pull of Japan, he has left Manila and made his own way back to the forbidden country in the certainty of martyrdom, and is soon lying with other priests in a fetid gaol before being burned at the stake.

The book has some obvious echoes. Velasco's confidence is shattered by the sound of a woman's laughter which reverberates in his memory, like the mocking laughter heard by Camus's Le Chetiv. Those familiar with Endo's earlier work will recognize, not only the verdict on Japanese insensitivity to the supernatural, but also that on the silence of God before Velasco's agonized questioning.

Velasco's motives at least are comprehensible, if somewhat banal. But Hasekura's seem hard to grasp, other than as a form of surrender to a destiny he has had no part in shaping, moulded by "that ugly emaciated man hanging on his cross". The narrative is interspersed with Velasco's journal, and this enables us to see further into his mind; but there is little in the way of self-analysis by Hasekura to balance it - since almost by definition the samurai is inarticulate. It is not clear why he should accept emotionally the role of Christian foisted on him, or retain it when he returns to Japan.

Apotasy, the volte-face which holds political overtones for certain modern Japanese intellectuals, gives Endo a better subject than perseverance. Velasco, so tormented by lust that he has to rope his wrists at night, undergoing humiliation and suffering but also ready to lie in the service of his mission, and ultimately accepting death at the price of his return to Japan, is really a cardboard figure. Certainly not hagiographical; but not, somehow, distinctive enough to compel the reader as does Rodriguez, the apostate priest in *Silence*.

Certain episodes here do, though, compel. The ocean-crossing after the ship is built, the hazards of Mexico, the encounter with a fugitive Japanese ex-monk in an Indian village outside Vera Cruz: all these things are far more real than the rather thin and commonplace spirituality and hesitations of Velasco, and the hopes and rages of the samurai himself. The translator has appended a useful historical background note and some observations by Endo from a conversation with another Japanese Catholic novelist, Mura Shunron, in which Endo described *The Samurai* as an autobiographical novel (*shikasen*) derived not so much from his own memories of a thirty-five day voyage to Europe in 1930, when he was the first post-war Japanese to study overseas; and of his bewilderment as a child of eleven; a not particularly willing candidate for baptism in the wake of his mother's conversion. That child speaks now with the voice of the unwillingly Christian samurai. Yet it is Velasco who drives the narrative forward, and through him Endo analyzes more than the tremendous impact of the European will on the Japanese nature, and its exasperation

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